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ABSTRACT

The negative effects of poverty, alienation, and racism influence the lives of black children most heavily. This report covering Michigan presents information and recommendations concerning the continuing decline in the quality of life for black children. It is the culmination of a series of activities including forums, symposia, and conferences on the black child in crisis. The discussion topics are the following: (1) the black family's struggle to survive; (2) education as a means for escaping poverty and achieving social mobility; (3) health: a sound mind in a sound body; and (4) job and economic security: fighting poverty, creating self-respect. The action-oriented recommendations offered for each of these topics include legislative initiatives and policy reviews and reforms. Key recommendations include the following: (1) fund a 10-year project to analyze and treat issues concerning the black family and child; (2) provide more day care; (3) encourage more parent and student participation in schools; (4) provide state aid for health professionals to practice in high-risk, underserved areas; (5) control drug abuse; (6) assure equitable legal process for blacks; and (7) provide training and employment skills to disadvantaged black youth. Three appendices include remarks from educators and government officials and a bibliography. Photographs, charts, and graphs illustrate the data. (VM)

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THE BLACK CHILD IN CRISIS

FINAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC FORUMS AND SYMPOSIA MAY-OCTOBER, 1986

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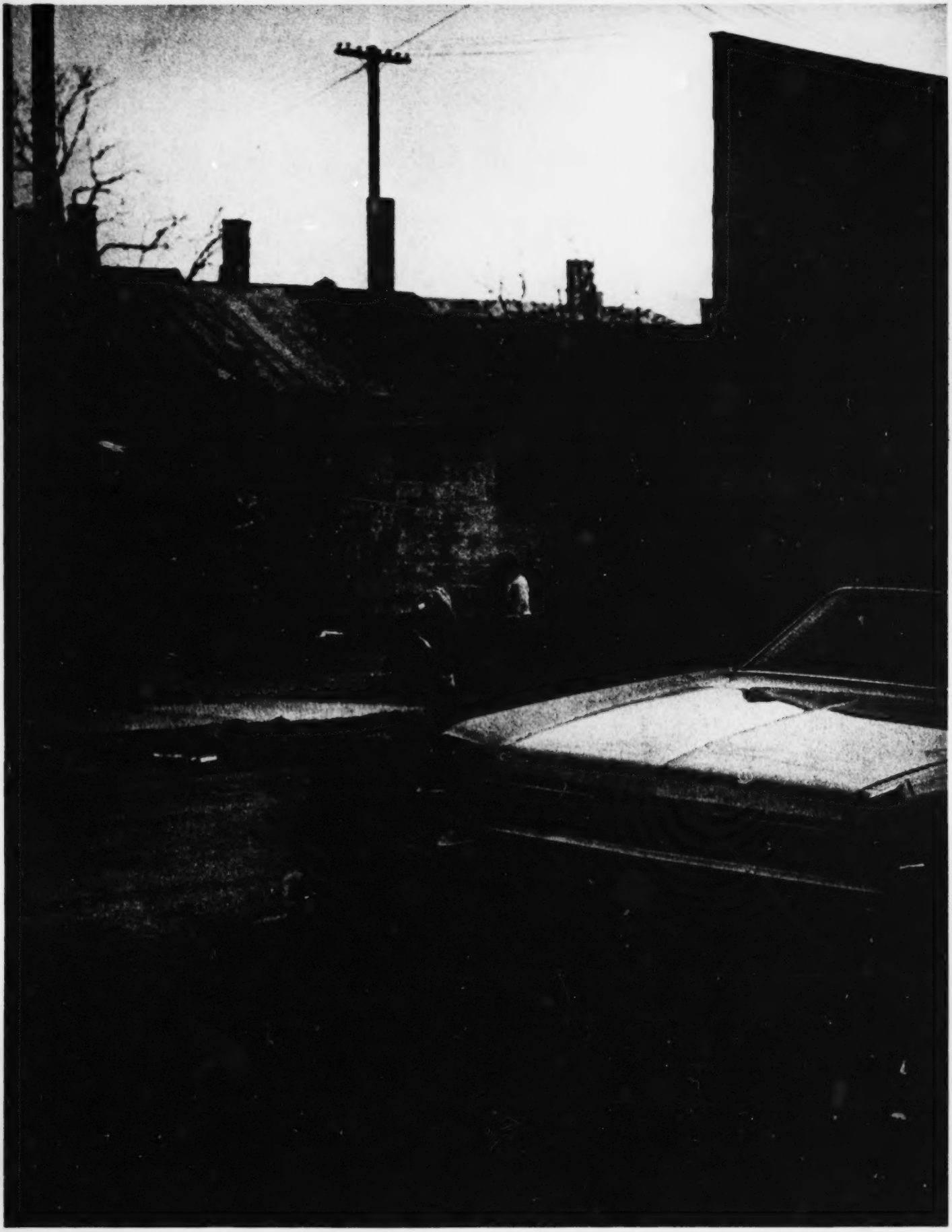
BLACK CHILD IN CRISIS

Final Report of the Public Forums and Symposia

May-October, 1986

Michigan Interagency Committee on the Black Child



FOREWORD

During the past years, the many reports indicating the alarming decline of the quality of life among poor and Black families have distressed all of us. Notwithstanding the increasing rate of poverty among thousands of White, Hispanic and Native American families, the single reality of being poor and Black requires a separate and focused analysis. The results of the paradoxes of poverty and alienation, including racial antagonism, fall most heavily among Black children. It is the disproportionate number of Black children in Michigan who are poor and in crisis which demands attention.

In response, an interagency committee was established to develop a plan from which solutions could be found to address this complex phenomenon. The committee proposed a framework of public forums and symposia to examine state agency policies and procedures, as well as state, county and local laws which affect the Black child and family. The intent was to produce proactive recommendations and programmatic strategies that will eliminate the barriers causing the crisis in which our Black children are engulfed.

During 1986, 200 local leaders organized, and more than 3000 Michigan citizens participated in seven statewide forums and symposia to examine and discuss "The Black Child in Crisis" and to propose and prepare strategies and recommendations for the people of Michigan and its representatives.

On October 21, 1986, at the Black Child in Crisis Conference in Lansing, a preliminary report of the symposia was presented to the Governor, legislators, state, county and city officials, government agency policy makers, family and children advocates, those who influence policy and legislation, and representatives of concerned citizens.

This *Final Report of the Black Child in Crisis* is an evaluation and analysis of the issues. It focuses on the action-oriented recommendations, proposed legislative initiatives, policy reviews and reforms that these concerned citizens developed during the statewide forums and symposia.

If Michigan's citizens are responsive to the needs of the state's most vulnerable citizen—the Black child—then all of society will benefit, for we all share some of these urgent problems. Focused attention to the solution of the problems and issues of the Black child can help all other poor and alienated children in our state.

The sponsors of this interdepartmental and agency commitment believe it will bring about a practical, systematic process for rendering solutions which will save our precious children.

Barbara Roberts Mason

Barbara Roberts Mason
Convener

October, 1987

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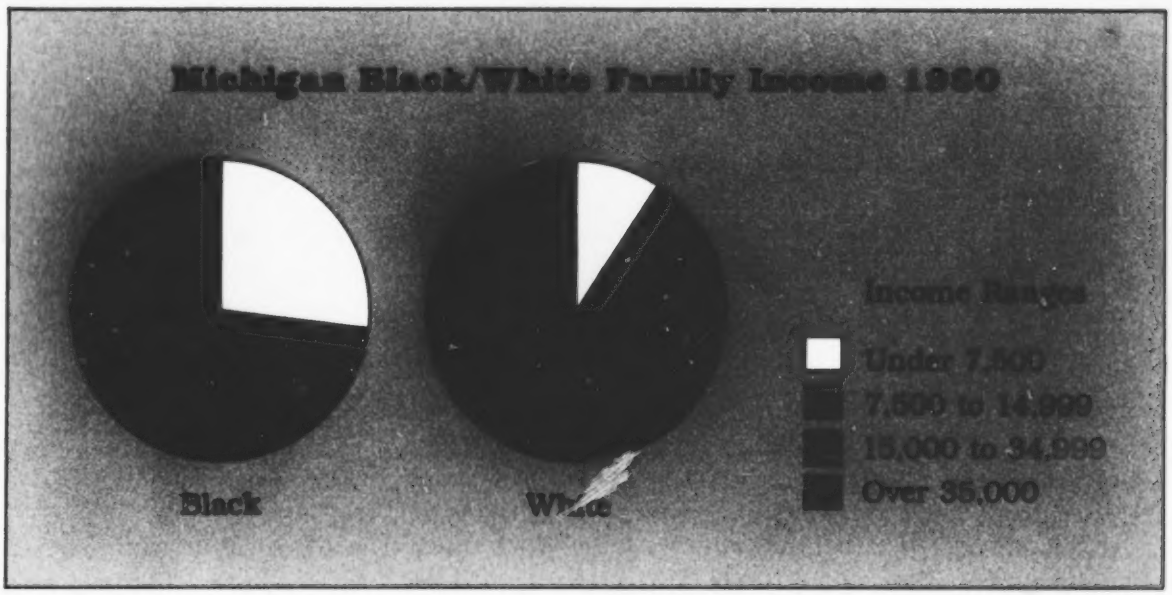
THE FAMILY:
STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

THE FAMILY: STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

The foundation of life for Black children—as for any children—is the family. That might seem obvious, but too many ambitious and well-meaning plans to help Black youngsters flounder because they are undermined by the shifting sands of broken, struggling families. Without the bedrock of a stable family, little may succeed. That is why the family comes first in this report.

Participants in the forums found it all too easy to note the major problems facing today's Black families. Contrary to the American assumption of constant improvement in materials and social trends, the situation for many Black families is worsening. A climate of decreasing income and increasing negative social forces is devastating many families. Actually, while most research focuses on the presumed weakness of the Black family, the marvel is that the Black family endures as well as it does.



Source: Bureau of Census
U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Figure I.

Michigan Black/White Family Income, 1980 indicates distribution of family income for 1980 by race. This table was computed by Joe T. Darden, State of Michigan, 1984.

Black Family Status

Investigations simply support what is generally known or suspected. For example, the proportion of children living in female-headed families more than doubled between 1960 and 1984. The proportion has doubled for both Blacks and Whites, but the result is that half of all Black children now live in households headed by women. Most of these children live in poverty.

It is futile, however, to discuss families headed by women without understanding the deteriorating status of Black men. The Black man's dwindling participation in the labor force must be remedied. The problem may stem from a combination of racism, inadequate affirmative-action policies, or a lack of education and skills.

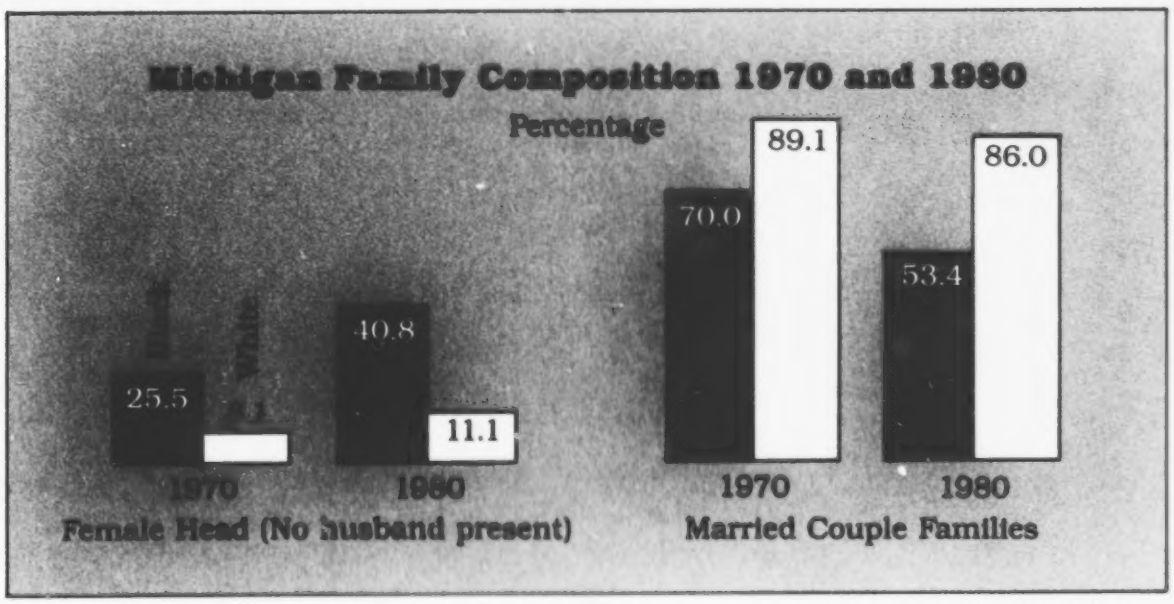
Additionally, Black workers often cannot take advantage of available employment opportunities in suburban or rural communities because they do not have access to dependable transportation.

The male head of household may be confined to a correctional institution where there is a disproportionate number of Black youth and men. These social and economic factors make it difficult for the poor Black family to secure and maintain adequate housing.

Whatever the reasons, they must be resolved to help more Black men become more involved in family life.

Community and civic groups also can be valuable in stabilizing the Black family. For example, it has become fashionable to exclude discussion of religious values in anything touching on public concerns, much less teach such values, but for many persons religious institutions have been and still are a source of strength.

Positive role models also are recognized as vital to the development of children, but they must be individuals with whom a youngster can identify so that "ordinary people" would be encouraged to take on this responsibility. Professional athletes and entertainers, for instance, draw adulation from



Source: Bureau of Census
U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Figure II.

Michigan Family Composition by Race and Percentage, 1970, 1980 indicates families with female head of household only (no husband present) and by married couple families.

youth of all races, but Black children in particular also need positive role models who are at hand in their own communities.

For example, it was suggested that mentors be provided for Black youth interested in particular careers. Fraternal and social organizations should be supported in their efforts to work with Black youth. Religious leaders and senior citizens should be encouraged to become surrogate grandparents for families.

Although the general economic status of Michigan families improved after the recession of the late 1970's and early 1980's, the socio-economic status of many Black families plummeted. One can easily ascertain the social and economic well-being of families by where they live. The Black and poor family, headed by an unemployed female or male or where the male adult is absent, has little access to adequate housing. Sub-standard living conditions become the normal situation for these families.

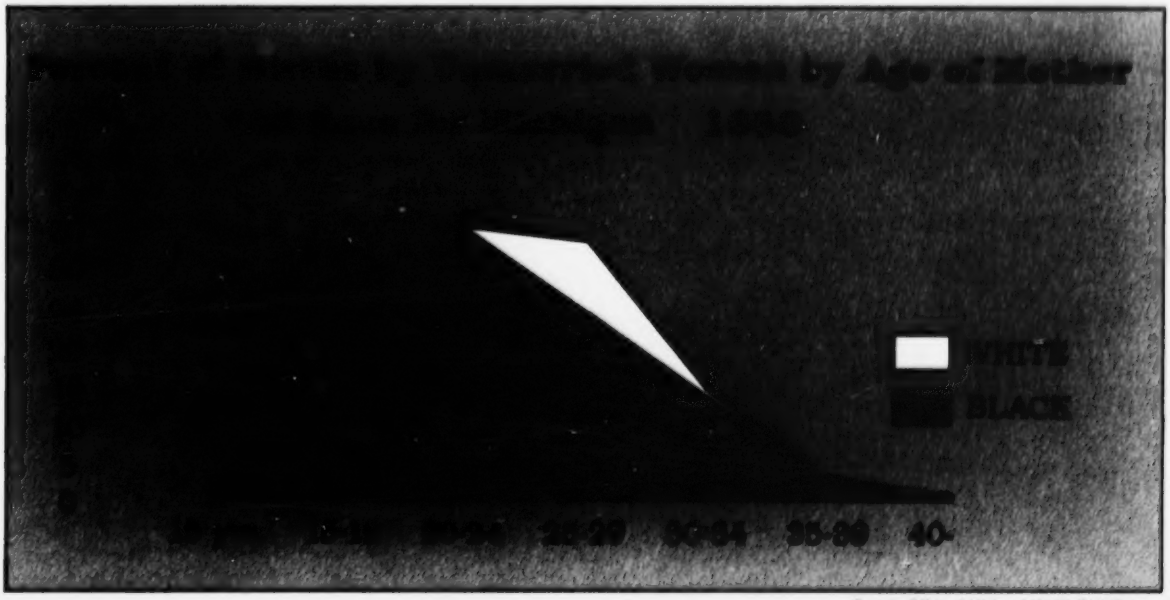
Lack of housing as a characteristic of poverty has a lasting and dramatic effect on the quality of life for many Black families. And, citizens who attended the public forums and symposia agreed that

the indicators of the extent of substandard housing in many Black communities should alert the state-community to support these basic family needs, such as housing through homesteading, low interest loans, rent subsidies or supplements which will lessen the burden on the family as well as on the state's citizens.

Adolescent Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy is a problem for society in general, but the effects among Blacks are especially serious. While there has been a steady decline nationwide in the number of births to adolescents of all races since the 1970s, Black teens remain twice as likely as White teens nationwide to become pregnant.

Black teens, when faced with an unintended pregnancy, also are more likely to have the child. Further, almost 60 percent of births to adolescents under 15 occur among Black youth. Black girls account for 27.9 percent of *all* births to teens, and for 47.3 percent of all births to unmarried teens.



Source: Office of Vital and Health Statistics
Michigan Dept. of Public Health

Figure III.

Percent of Births by Unmarried Women by Age of Mother and Race for Michigan, 1980 indicates that the rate of births by unmarried Black women in their teens exceeds that of unmarried White women, but the situation reverses from ages 25 to 35. At ages 20-24 and over 35, the rates are about equal.

Adolescent mothers—and adolescent fathers—also are less likely to complete high school or to obtain steady jobs than other students.

Michigan does, of course, have several services for pregnant teens. They are provided primarily by programs funded by the Michigan Departments of Education, Public Health, and Social Services. Organizations such as Cooperative Extension and Planned Parenthood also conduct programs. These services include: prenatal classes, academic instruction, counseling, health and social services, and parenting classes.

There are media campaigns aimed at prevention, such as the "How to Say No" program.

In light of the number of pregnant and parenting teens in Michigan, many more programs are needed.

Child Care

The increase in the number of working mothers, as well as the rise in the number of working single parents, has brought more need for child-care services. The percentage of mothers in the work force nationwide increased from 40 percent in 1970 to 60 percent in 1983, with the highest increase among women with children under three years old.

Issues of availability, accessibility and affordability dominate the problems of child care throughout Michigan. Symposia participants emphasized the need for quality, affordable full-time infant and preschool care.

Black children, regardless of age, are more likely than White children to have working mothers. Black mothers tend to enter or return to the labor force when their children are younger and they are more likely to work full time.

Black parents most often seek child-care help among relatives and close friends. Efforts should be made to encourage more family day-care homes in Black communities, including support services and workshops for family providers.

Symposia participants said a variety of child-care services should be available throughout the day. Many children are left without adult supervision at the end of the school day until a parent arrives home from work. Tutorial and recreational programs, for example, are needed.

State funding through the Departments of Social Services and Education is available to communities for the development of child-care programs before and after school for children 5 to 13 years old. Such programs are not widely known, however, and Black community organizations should be encouraged to apply for the funds.

The cost of child care, whatever the program, also must be reviewed frequently. The cost is increasing at a rate almost equal to the demand, while subsidies are decreasing steadily. Federal efforts have used tax credits, but that method is of scant help in meeting the weekly cost of child care for under-employed families.

A few Michigan employers have recognized the importance of child care and have adopted their own programs to help employees. Those efforts should be publicized and incentives for other businesses to participate should be provided.

In short, the citizens concluded that quality child-care services should be available and affordable for all Michigan families.

Child Welfare System

Too many Black families, citizens said, are being split up when children are placed in foster care or surrendered for adoption. Some children are abandoned because their families can not or will not care for them. Some are taken because there is suspicion of abuse or neglect. Other children, who have run afoul of the law, are supervised by the courts or remanded to a state facility.

When it is not desirable or possible to keep children with their parents, the adoptive process must be improved so that Black adoptive and foster-care homes can gain custody of children. Families separated by child-welfare services need regular contact with the children who have been removed from the home.

Further, as the number of adolescents in foster care increases, more attention must be given to preparing those youths for independent living. Many now stay in foster care until they reach 18 and often leave unprepared for the realities of life.

Many citizens also stressed that the Black community itself should take the responsibility to help in meeting the problems of the Black child and family. The emphasis must be on Black self-help efforts, although participation by others is needed.

Recommendations:

- **The Governor, Legislature and co-sponsoring State Departments** should form a pilot, community-based Black Child and Family Institute to coordinate research and activities on family, health, education and employment. The institute should be monitored by a commission appointed by the Governor.

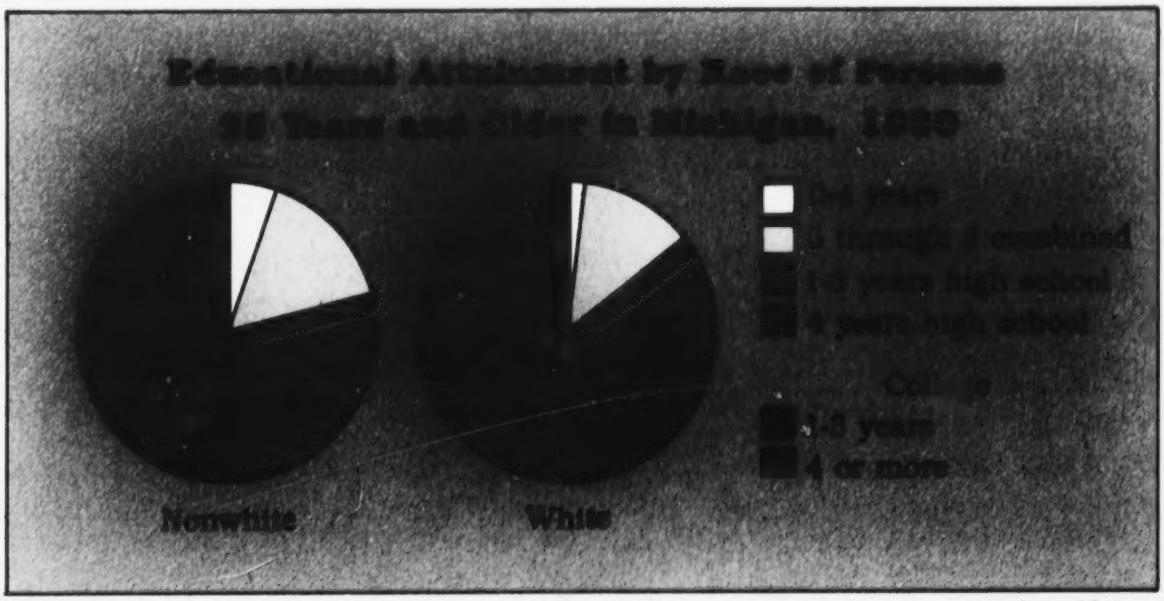
- **The Governor** should appoint a statewide interagency committee to monitor and coordinate the adoption of the recommendations and activities of state agencies in their responses to the Report of the Public Forums and Symposia on the Black Child in Crisis.
- **The Legislature** should make a 10-year funding commitment to analyze, manage and treat issues concerning the Black family and child.
- **The Legislature and Departments of Commerce and Social Services** should expand rent-supplement programs and low-interest rate programs for homesteading by poor families.
- **The Department of Corrections and the Courts** should establish an independent monitoring committee to ensure fairness and consistency in sentencing of Black defendants.
- **The Department of Transportation** should conduct a study every two years on the affordability and accessibility of transportation to major agencies and businesses in cities and suburbs.
- **The Departments of Public Health, Education, and Social Services** should develop community education and outreach efforts to present clearly the problems of teenage parenthood and to develop practical options to pregnancy and parenthood for adolescents.
- **The Departments of Social Services and Education** should provide for low-income families to operate licensed cooperative day-care and preschool programs in their homes.
- **The Department of Social Services** should place a priority on home-based prevention services and consider removal of children only as a last resort.
- **The Department of Social Services** should remove deterrents to the reunification of families.
- **The Department of Social Services** should increase the child-care reimbursement rate for AFDC recipients to the approximate costs of the care.
- **The Department of Social Services** should implement programs to encourage and recruit Black families, including single-parent families, to consider adopting Black children.
- **The Department of Social Services** should develop and implement policies to reduce the duration of foster-home care.
- **The Departments involved** should remove from their procedures and documents the phrase "illegitimate child."

EDUCATION:
THE WAY OUT AND UP

EDUCATION: THE WAY OUT AND UP

Black Americans long have realized that education is vital in their struggle for freedom and full equality. They see education as a vehicle by which they can control and shape their destiny, build stable communities, provide for their families, and fully realize the fruits of democracy.

Yet, the nationwide pattern is that Black children, as a group, do poorly in nearly every education measure. Even in Michigan, which has been a pioneer and leader in education, the gap between Black and White students is deplorable. All citizens—no matter what their race or where they live—who are concerned about Michigan's future must devote immediate attention to the problems that Black students face.



Source: Bureau of Census
U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Figure IV.

Educational Attainment by Race depicts the following percentages: 0-4 years—Nonwhite 5.1, White 1.7. 5-8 yrs.—Nonwhite 15.4, White, 12.5. 1-3 yrs. high school—Nonwhite, 24.3, White, 16.0. 4 yrs. high school— Nonwhite, 31.1, White, 39.2. 1-3 yrs. college—Nonwhite, 16.5; White, 15.6. 4 or more yrs. college—Nonwhite, 7.6; White 14.9.

Preschool and Early Childhood Education

All children need to get off to a good educational start, and at no time is the need more pronounced than in the early years of Black pupils. The promotion of high-quality preschool education was widely hailed by citizens attending the symposia.

Research shows that preschool education is a bargain both for the children themselves and for taxpayers and society generally. A good start in school lessens the need for special education and tutorial programs, and the chances of having to repeat a grade. In turn, greater school success leads to greater success in adolescence and adulthood through less delinquency, a drop in welfare-use rates, a decline in high school dropout rates, a drop in teen pregnancy and a reluctance to participate in crimes.

An excellent example of the benefits of preschool education can be found in Ypsilanti, where the nationally acclaimed Perry Preschool is located. A scientifically selected and monitored group of Black children was followed from the time the youngsters entered the Perry program until after they reached the age of high school graduation.

Results showed that the preschool students did better in subsequent regular grades than other pupils in the same school, dropped out less frequently, and were in trouble with the law less often.

Recommendations:

- **The Department of Education** should provide for affordable and accessible preschool and early childhood education programs for working and single parents.
- **The Governor's Human Services Cabinet** should develop a state plan for preschool children at risk (those considered likely to have major education problems) that would include quality, free, day-care and preschool education.
- **The Legislature** should expand the state-aid formula to include per capita funding for education for at-risk and low-income preschool children.
- **The Department of Education** should convene a committee to develop practical, affordable and accessible *private* alternative preschool programs for children not served under Headstart and other state and federally funded programs. The committee should include representatives from a range of business, civic, church and government agencies and groups.
- **Local school districts** should use competent Black students from high schools and colleges as volunteer tutors to serve as role models.
- **Local school districts** should train and encourage parents to reinforce the child's preschool activities at home and to participate in the planning for children already in school.

Kindergarten-Elementary Education

The finest high school and college programs are useless if students first do not get a solid grounding in the three "R's." The citizens especially were concerned over the alarming rates of illiteracy in Michigan and in the nation. It was clear that a disproportionate number of Black children never have learned necessary reading skills during kindergarten and elementary school grades.

Citizens also complained of Black students being promoted to a higher grade in spite of their failure to gain basic skills in reading and mathematics during their elementary experience.

Recommendations:

- **Local school districts** should promote pupils only when they master course content.
- **Local school districts** should provide in-service training to teachers on test administration.
- **Local school districts** should adopt plans to ensure that students are taught reading in *all* classrooms.
- **Local school districts** should ensure that teacher and administrator expectations of students are high and realistic.
- **Local school districts** should recruit parent volunteers to work in school buildings during the regular school day.
- **Local school districts** should increase efforts to employ Black male teachers in kindergarten and elementary grades.

Secondary Education

It is not the fault of high schools if pupils enter unprepared because of faulty kindergarten-elementary training. It is the high schools, nonetheless, that inherit the problem and have the last opportunity to do something about it. If they fail, the prospects for Black youth in later life are bleak. Too many secondary schools fail to meet the needs of Black students who are considered in danger of dropping out of school from the first day that they enroll in high school.

To counter such problems, the symposia participants recommended smaller class sizes, stronger

counseling programs, adequate financial support and increased cooperation between the school and home. Citizens also suggested alternative learning programs for students, especially for students who are aspiring for entry-level jobs upon graduating from high school.

Recommendations:

- **The State Board of Education and the Department of Education** should "adopt" a high school that largely serves Black students where there is a disproportionate number of low-achieving, at-risk students and provide special technical assistance to that school.
- **Local school districts** should require reading instruction for all high school students who are reading below grade level.
- **Local school districts** should encourage all students to take national assessment examinations *before* their senior year and provide test-preparation instructions.
- **Local school districts** should develop partnership programs with local businesses.
- **Local school districts** should discourage requests for rigid "tracking" and placement of students.
- **Local school districts** should provide programs to encourage school-age parents to remain in school.

Curriculum

The citizens studying education issues were most concerned about the type and quality of classes. Most said the courses offered in their local districts were sub-par or, at best, mediocre.

Participants cited these specific curriculum problems:

—Black students are given fewer opportunities to participate in advanced and enriched courses.

—Because of their overrepresentation in vocational education programs, many Black students are less likely to have adequate English, mathematics and science backgrounds.

—While urban Black students may take the same courses as their White suburban counterparts, such courses often are watered down, ill focused, partially covered and void of challenging activities.

—Black students are less likely to have the most trained and competent instructors, in large part due to the distinct teacher-salary differences between urban and suburban school districts.

—Inadequate textbooks, poor laboratory equipment and dated instructional aids are the norm, rather the exception, for many Black students.

—Schools provide few opportunities for Black students to become proficient at taking standardized tests.

It is unrealistic to believe that Black students would be able to hurdle the many education obstacles that face them without a considerable financial investment in equalizing course offerings, staffing and opportunities to those of their White peers.

Recommendations:

- **Local school districts** should provide child-care programs in the school so that school-age mothers can continue their education.
- **The State Board of Education** should allow reimbursement for the transportation needs of teenaged parents.
- **Local school districts** should form a committee to monitor Black children who are likely to have major problems, including school practices of suspension, expulsion and dropouts.
- **Local school districts** should promote the positive attributes of vocational education and inform parents of the benefits of vocational and technical education as preparation for careers.
- **Local school districts** should expand course offerings to include classes on sex education, parenting, nutrition and health, African-American history and culture, family economics, personal and interpersonal skills, and test preparation.
- **Local school districts** should reduce class sizes and provide tutors for students.

Special Education

A continuing problem in the public school system is the overrepresentation of Black students—especially male Black students—in certain special education programs, notably Educable Mentally Impaired (EMI) and Learning Disabled (LD) classrooms. In Michigan, EMI classes are usually separate and hold more than twice the expected rate of Black children. In addition, poor Black children are 3.5 times more likely to be identified by their teachers as mentally retarded than are their White counterparts.

Two factors which may cause Black overrepresentation in special education classes are culturally biased testing and cultural differences between teachers and their students. It is suggested that when a specific cultural group is overrepresented in a particular category of special education, the system of assessment should be reviewed for cultural bias. Student advocates should be involved in these reviews and a multifactored assessment should be utilized.

Researchers have identified four areas needing immediate attention: (1) working with educational institutions to improve the identification and placement process; (2) working with parents to make them more knowledgeable consumers of the educational system; (3) using the legislative and litigation process in defending the rights of Black students and disabled students, and (4) developing community resources to be used in meeting the needs of the affected students and their parents.

To this end, extensive community outreach is necessary to promote student advocacy by parents. Parents should be educated in their rights to request or disallow testing, to contest special education placement, or to be informed of the probability of misdiagnosis and/or the benefits of special education.

Recommendations:

- **The State Board of Education and Michigan Department of Education** should increase the requirements for teacher certification in special education to include courses on multi-cultural education or courses on African-American history and culture.
- **Local school districts** should evaluate the validity of assessment criteria that result in the overrepresentation of Black students in special education classes.
- **Local school districts** should offer more ways to integrate special education pupils into the general student body.
- **Local school districts** should establish a panel of teachers, parents and community representatives to review the initial assessment for placement and to monitor regularly the progress of students placed in special education.

School Dropouts

The incidence of dropouts among Black students is a disaster in Michigan. It is especially devastating in urban school districts where it is estimated that from 30 to 60 percent of students who enter the ninth grade fail to get a high school diploma four years later.

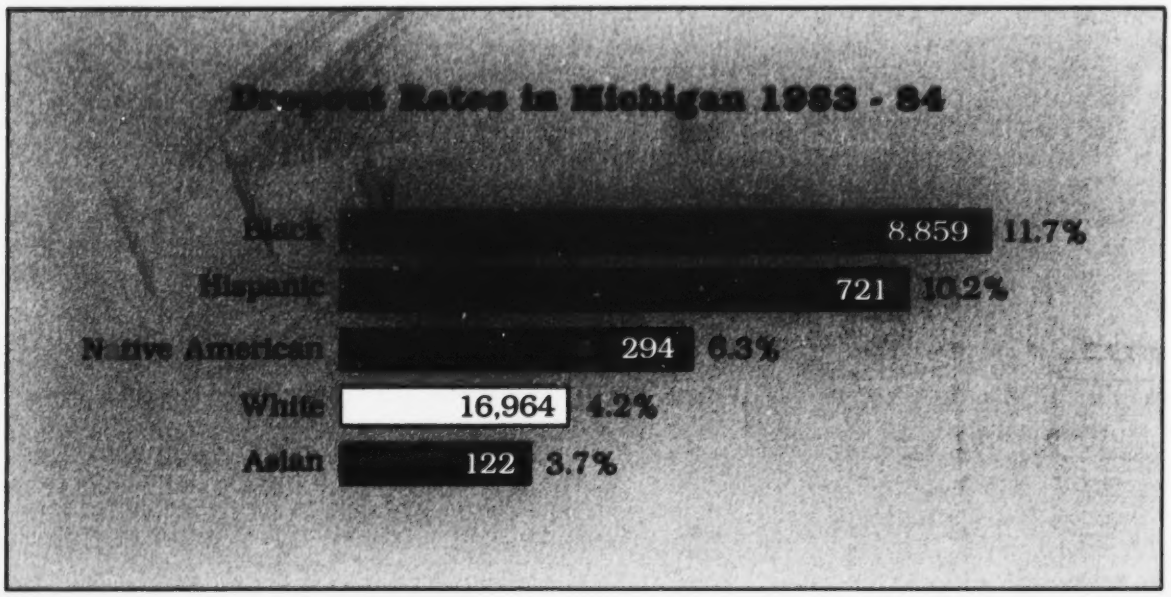
What happens to many dropouts is all too clear: Dropouts earn less and are most prone to have frequent and longer periods of unemployment. Further, as adults, dropouts usually experience a myriad of problems in trying to provide economic and educational support for their children. Finally, many dropouts turn to crime or welfare for survival, thereby becoming social burdens on all taxpayers and citizens.

The Department of Education recently received $700,000 for dropout-prevention pilot projects. The projects will provide jobs and academic support to 16—18 year old students considered likely to drop out of school. The program certainly has good intentions, but many symposia participants felt that it was too little, too late.

Recommendations:

- **The Legislature** should amend the state School Code to include a uniform definition of a school dropout, making it easier to determine how many students actually *do* drop out.

- **The Legislature** should require each school district to establish a committee to plan and monitor dropout-prevention programs and report results annually to the State Board of Education.
- **The Legislature** should increase funding for programs in dropout prevention.
- **The State Board of Education** should establish a School Dropout Prevention Committee to explore new approaches, with members drawn from community, civic, church and parent groups.
- **The State Board of Education** should analyze the effect of the compulsory school attendance law on the dropout problem.
- **Local school districts** should eliminate school practices that "push students out."
- **The Department of Education,** with the assistance of the **Michigan Department of Civil Rights,** should monitor the suspension and expulsion of minority students.
- **Local school districts** should work with local departments of parks and recreation to establish after-school programs aimed at keeping Black youth in organized activities during their leisure time.
- **The Legislature** should sponsor a legislative conference on school dropouts and invite participants from states that receive legislative funding for dropout prevention.



Source: Office of School and Community Affairs
Michigan Dept. of Education

Figure V.

Dropout Rates in Michigan for the 1983-84 School Year by Number and Percentage shows that almost 12 percent of Black students dropped out of school during the 1983-84 school year. The dropout rates for Michigan students has varied little from year to year over the last ten years.

School Management

Researchers on effective schools agree that a school building's administrative/management team is key to the success of its pupils. It does little good to have district-wide plans that look excellent on paper if those operating a particular school building cannot carry out the programs so that students learn.

The most effective building leaders often are described as task-oriented, student-centered, competent, businesslike, flexible, and with a low tolerance for poor performance by teachers or pupils alike. In other words, good building administrators expect and demand that both students and staff do their jobs and do them well.

That view might appear fairly obvious, but many symposia participants complained that building administrators often do not expect Black students to do well and so, fulfilling that prophecy, most do not.

Many citizens were most concerned about the selection and performance of building principals. Most districts spend considerable time and thought in selecting a district superintendent, but symposia participants saw the principal as the other key leader in a child's education.

Finally, some participants stressed that school boards ultimately must be held responsible for improving the achievement of Black students. Board members should give a superintendent clear and specific directions on what is expected and then back up the superintendent, especially on occasions of tough decision making such as school finance, curriculum reform and staffing.

Recommendations:

- **Local school boards** should set short and long-range plans that clearly state the goals for Black student achievement.
- **Local school boards** should include parents and students in the selection of the district superintendent and building administrators.
- **Local school boards** should require principals and central office administrators to develop annual action plans for improving Black student achievement.
- **Local school boards** should report annually to the community on the education progress of all students by race and sex.

Teachers

Black students need, as one citizen put it, " . . . the best and brightest teachers and administrators." Special efforts should be made to attract competent and caring teachers to instruct Black students. Too often, many participants contended, a lack of funding and low staff morale have resulted in Black pupils not getting enough teachers who measure up to those standards.

Equally important, though, many participants talked of a need for more minority teachers and other staffers who can serve as role models for Black students. If, some citizens said, students consistently see members of their own race as teachers and administrators, it can help youth to realize that higher education and training are achievable aims rather than distant dreams.

Michigan, unfortunately, not only does not have enough minority teachers but is losing ground. A recent State Board of Education report, "The Future of Teaching in Michigan," noted that "the number of minority teachers is declining while the proportion of minority students is increasing."

This is particularly the case for Black teachers. Their numbers probably will decline at a much faster rate than their White counterparts over the next few years because of low Black student enrollment in college teacher-preparation program and a turning away from teaching as a career choice for many Black students.

There also is concern over the effect in Michigan of the nationwide trend for teacher and administrator competency tests. Nobody wants incompetent teachers, but the states that already have adopted competency tests have seen a disproportionate decline in the number of minority candidates who earn teaching certificates.

Recommendations:

- **The State Board of Education** should develop a plan to recruit more Blacks into teaching.
- **The State Board of Education** should appoint Black educators, psychologists and citizens to the committee that develops competency tests for teachers and school administrators.
- **The State Board of Education** should change the teacher certification rules to require all prospective teachers to have courses in African-American history and culture.
- **Local school districts** should provide in-service programs for current teachers and staff to increase their understanding of children from various backgrounds and cultures.

School Finance

It is seldom popular to discuss financing when that means to discuss taxes, but the issue is critical in improving the education of Black students. Michigan's school-financing system hinges on the local property tax, and it is precisely that levy that is the most unequal from school district to district. The matter is complicated, but the bottom line is that rich districts get richer and property-poor districts—where most Black children are concentrated—get poorer.

In some cases in Michigan, the amount of tax support for children depends literally on whether their home is on one side of a street or the other.

To illustrate, there is the example of the disparity between the predominately Black school district of Highland Park and the nearly all-White Dearborn district. Both districts are neighboring areas of suburban Detroit.

In 1983-84, Highland Park had a state-equalized valuation (SEV) in property of $17,914 behind each pupil. That meant that each mill of property tax brought in only $17.91 per student. The nearby Dearborn district, on the other hand, had an SEV per pupil of $162,019 and thus got $162.02 per child for each mill levied.

Perhaps the most extreme disparity among Michigan's local school districts was the Bridgeman Public Schools of Berrien County, where an SEV of $686,623 per child yielded $686.62 per pupil for each tax mill levied, while the state average was $57.24 per pupil.

There have been many attempts in recent decades by the Legislature, Governor or school groups to reform the financing system. Some different approaches have been adopted and did at least temporarily reduce certain types of inequities among districts. Most of the changes, however, showed serious flaws when conditions changed, and none of the variations in the formula has been drastic enough to bring true, lasting equality.

Recommendations:

- **The State Board of Education** should appoint a blue-ribbon committee to study and make recommendations to improve school finance.
- **The State Board of Education** should mount a campaign to inform citizens on the need for school-finance reform.
- **The Legislature** should appropriate more funds for general-assistance aid to schools to decrease dependence on local property taxes.
- **The Legislature** should continue the task force that is working with the State Board of Education to develop a program to fund school districts based on needs and resources.

Parent and Community Involvement

Even schools with adequate staffs and funding can fail to reach pupils, especially minority children, if parents and the community do not reinforce and monitor what happens in the classroom. Citizens commented at the forums that ways must be found to establish better two-way communications between school and home.

Unfortunately, many poor, underemployed, poorly educated parents feel intimidated in the school setting and feel uncomfortable discussing education issues with teachers and counselors.

More ways must be found, the symposia participants said, to encourage confidence in parents to speak on behalf of their children and to educate parents on their rights. More districts also need to encourage the use of school buildings as activity centers for various community activities after school hours.

Recommendations:

- **The local school and community** should initiate performance contracts with parents, teachers and principals as a way of clearly reflecting what all the groups expect of one another.
- **The State Board of Education** should develop guidelines on how school districts and communities can work cooperatively to build excellent education programs.
- **The State Board of Education** should recognize exemplary school-community relations programs.
- **Every school building** should be used as a community multipurpose activity center.
- **The local school and community** should develop outreach programs, such as home visits by teachers, principals, counselors, and other support staff.
- **Local schools and the community** should establish student advocacy programs and use community volunteers to build the self-esteem and positive self-image of Black students.
- **The local school and community** should initiate partnerships with corporations and other businesses to provide job opportunities for poor school-age parents.

- **The local school and community** should form partnerships with churches, social and fraternal organizations for "Adopt-A-School" programs.
- **The local school and community** should establish a committee to explore alternatives to having uniformed police officers in the school building.

Higher Education

One of the distressing things about the education of Black students has been the significant decline in the past few years in the proportion of Blacks who enroll in Michigan's colleges and universities. That is at a time when more and more education and training beyond high school is needed to give students a chance for a good career. A recent report to the State Board of Education found that Black enrollment dropped from 11 percent in 1976 to 9 percent in 1984, a loss of more than 6,800 students statewide.

The situation is especially unfortunate because the number of Black high school students has increased in recent years, yet the enrollment of Blacks in Michigan's colleges and universities continues to decline.

Several factors contribute to the enrollment drop. For one, the rising cost of college tuition particularly hits Black students, who tend to come from poor families. In addition, many Black students who do enroll in college have been inadequately prepared in their local school districts.

Further, many Black students feel isolated and cut off from their culture and friends at college campuses where they are in such a small minority.

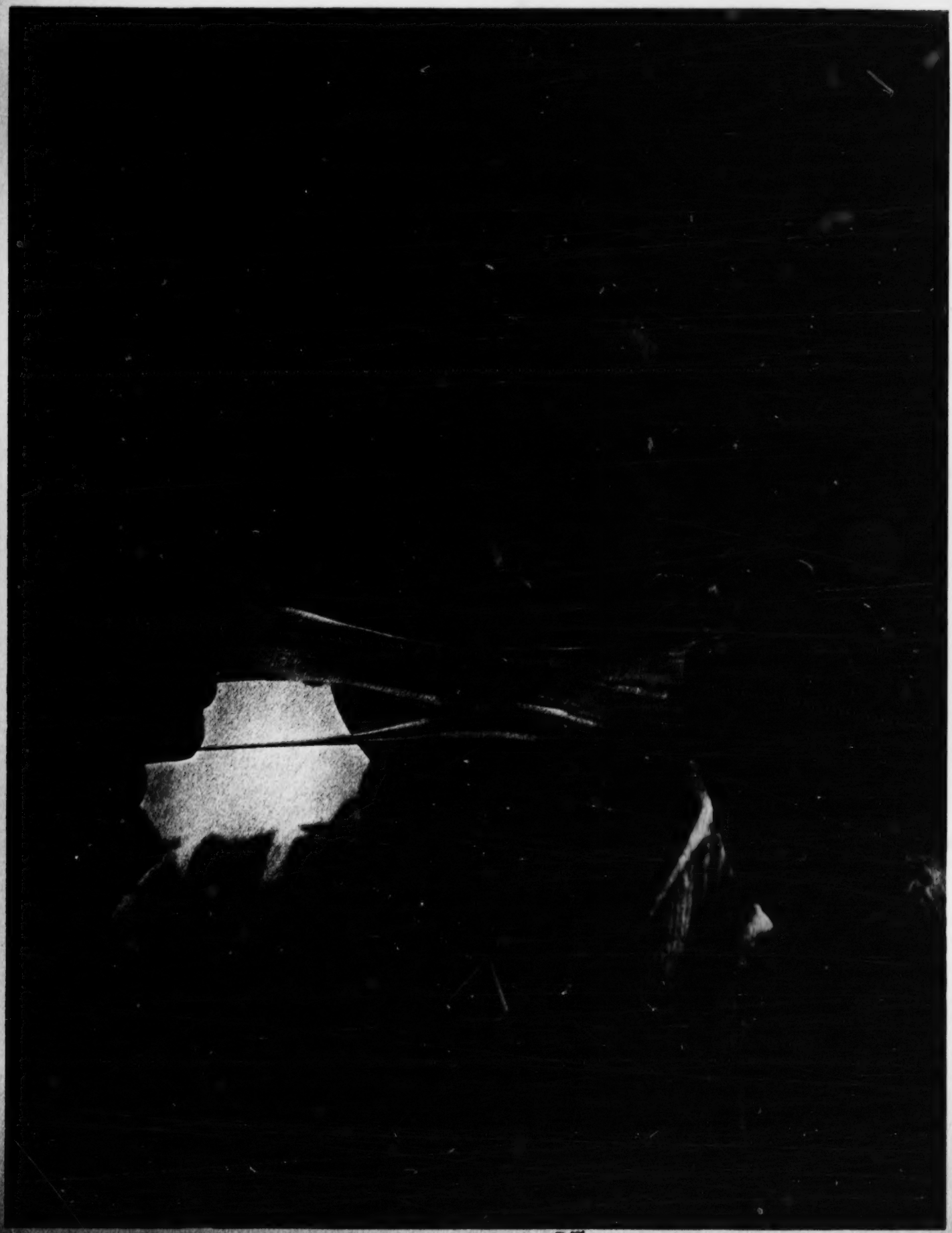
The combined result is that even when Black students do enroll in predominantly White colleges they often drop out.

Citizens at the symposia called for more financial and academic help for Black students so that once they are on the campus, they will have access to essential support programs.

Recommendations:

- **Community Colleges and Universities** should work with school districts, community, civic and religious groups to recruit Black youth.
- **Community Colleges and Universities** should work with school districts to provide counseling and mentor relationships betwen faculty and students, and to provide campus visitation programs.
- **Colleges and Universities** should establish goals and timelines for improving Black student enrollment and retention.
- **Colleges of Education** should provide opportunities in teacher-training programs to help prepare future teachers to work directly with students likely to have major problems.
- **The Department of Education, the Legislature, Colleges and Universities** should fully implement the 1986 *Report on Minorities, Handicappers and Women in Michigan's Colleges and Universities* by the State Superintendent's Special Advisory Committee.

HEALTH: A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

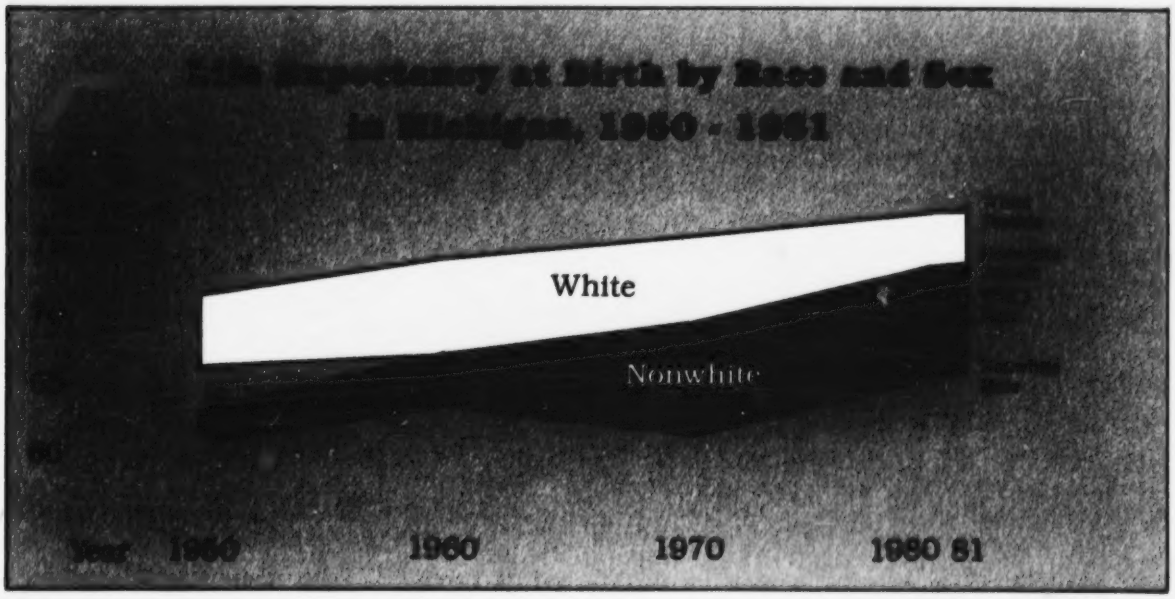


HEALTH: A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

The state of physical and mental health of Black children is alarming. A wide gap exists between the well-being of Black and White children and their families. Michigan has begun projects to improve programs in health and mental health, but further improvements must be a high state priority.

Current health programs, no matter how well intentioned and planned, tend to focus on diseases rather than on the conditions that cause them. In the case of Black children, that means health issues cannot be resolved outside the larger framework of housing, unemployment, poverty, crime and discrimination.

Those situations, in turn, can trigger child abuse, neglect, emotional disturbances, delinquency, suicide, drug dependence, running away, and violent acts.



Source: Office of Vital and Health Statistics
Michigan Dept. of Public Health

Figure VI.

Life Expectancy at Birth by Race and Sex, 1950-1981 indicates that the life expectancy for Nonwhite females has increased steadily from 1950 at 63.4 years to 1981 at 73.4 years, crossing and exceeding the life expectancy of White males in 1960. Nonwhite males have shown an increased life expectancy of 65.8 years in 1981 after a decline in the 60's and 70's.

Accessibility to Health Care

Citizens at the forums said Black children and their families often are caught in a double bind: They may need health care more than Whites, and when they do, they must cope with high-priced care, inadequate transportation, insensitive physicians and long waits for service.

The result is that illnesses are less likely to be detected and treated promptly. Black children are twice as likely as White children to have no regular source of health care and are likely to be seriously ill when they finally do see a doctor.

Many participants particularly discussed problems with Medicaid, the federal/state program of health care for the poor. Those on Medicaid complained of a lack of autonomy because they are not free to choose their own physicians.

Those who are poor, but working, may suffer because they are ineligible for Medicaid, and often either have inadequate or no private insurance.

It may be difficult sometimes to link illness directly with lack of specific medical care, but there is evidence to indicate the problem.

For example, in 1981 the federal government cut 500,000 families from Medicaid rolls; in Michigan, the health-care benefits were taken from 16,000 families. A recent study by the University of Michigan has shown that the result of these cuts was a reduction in the number of visits to doctors by poor families.

On a nationwide basis, the United States is one of only two developed nations without some type of national health insurance. Some 22 million Americans use Medicaid, yet about 35 million have no health insurance and an estimated 35 million others have inadequate insurance.

Recommendations:

- **The Governor** should improve coordination among state agencies in administering existing programs to improve the health of Blacks and to increase the availability of health professionals to Blacks.
- **The Departments of Public Health and Mental Health** should work with the state Office of Medical Affairs to develop an accessibility plan that assures that community health and mental health care services are established in low-income neighborhoods.
- **The Governor, Legislature and Departments of Public Health and Mental Health** should provide state-paid physicians, dentists, psychiatrists and other health professionals to practice in high-risk and underserved urban and rural areas.
- **The Department of Transportation** should consider providing low-cost or free transportation to health and mental health facilities for poor people.
- **The Department of Public Health,** with the help of county health departments, should adopt an outreach campaign for minority populations to furnish health information and educational materials.
- **The Governor** should direct the Office of Medical Affairs to develop a statewide comprehensive health-insurance plan free of any deductibles or co-insurance for all Michigan residents.

Blacks in the Health Field

Studies show that there is a shortage of Blacks and other minorities in the medical profession. The proportion of U.S. physicians who are Black increased only 0.5 percent between 1950 and 1980, going from 2.1 percent to 2.6 percent.

Something must be done, forum participants said, to help finance the training of more minority physicians, nurses, hospital administrators, and other health professionals.

One method mentioned by many citizens was the increased use of volunteers, who already constitute a fifth of all drug-treatment staff and a fourth of all drug-abuse counseling staff.

There also was a call for more non-Black health professionals to become more culturally sensitive to the needs and experience of Blacks.

Recommendations:

- **State Departments, professional organizations and Colleges and Universities** should develop a program to recruit Blacks and other minority persons for careers in health and mental health care.
- **The Legislature, Department of Education and Colleges** should increase financial aid to minority students through scholarships and low-interest loans for those entering medical school or health-related fields.

Preventive Medicine

One of the best ways to overcome health problems of the poor is to prevent illness in the first place. Prevention is not only the most effective method but also the least costly to taxpayers.

For instance, immunization against childhood diseases, routine dental care and counseling against abuse habits save money in the long run. Preventive medicine for low-income Blacks could

save billions of dollars and many thousands of lives.

An increased investment, for another example, in the detection and treatment of high blood pressure would reduce costs involved with stroke and heart disease.

One of the best investments would be better care for pregnant women and infants. Regular medical monitoring of pregnancy and frequent checkups for babies and young children reduce infant-mortality rates and help assure healthier lives for mother and child.

There was overwhelming support among participants at the symposia for the state to consider prevention plans as a top priority of state, county and local health, mental health, education, social services, recreational and criminal justice agencies.

Recommendations:

- **The Governor** should issue a clear and comprehensive policy on prevention in health and mental health, accompanied by objectives and schedules, and the **Legislature** should appropriate the necessary funds to support it.
- **The Department of Mental Health** should cease its approval of waivers now granted to community health boards for prevention services.
- **The Legislature** should appropriate funds to allow health screening annually for low-income children and others likely to have major problems.

Hunger and Nutrition

The United States often is considered the richest nation in the world. Yet, hunger in Michigan remains an appalling reality. The large number of community food banks is a testament to the degree of the problem.

The hunger situation is intolerable. Poverty and food deprivation move hand in hand. Not all the poor are malnourished, but virtually all the malnourished are poor. Unfortunately, hundreds of Black families have subsisted on inadequate diets not only for years but also for whole generations.

Some of the diseases caused by malnutrition today may sound like names out of a distant past or the poorest Third World countries: scurvy, pellagra, rickets and beri-beri, as well as clinical signals of deficiency such as mastitis, depigmentation and night blindness.

One indicator of poor nutrition and anemia is that between a fifth and a third of Black children and youth have hemoglobin levels that fall below the level of Whites.

Recommendations:

- **The Governor** should convene a Task Force on Hunger to determine the number of hungry and nutritionally poor children in Michigan and to plan a response that will assure that all children get an adequate diet.
- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture** should expand its efforts and develop a plan to ensure that surplus foods are provided to all children in need.
- **State Departments** should launch a statewide campaign to make food-stamp recipients aware of the best ways to use nutrition benefits.

Infant Mortality

Like many other health problems, infant mortality affects Blacks disproportionately. In 1981 Black infants died at twice the rate of White infants in Michigan. The gap worsened in 1986, when the Black rate was 23.4 percent, compared with the White rate of 10.3 percent.

That Black rate is higher than in the Scandinavian countries, Japan, most of western Europe, Canada and Australia.

In the city of Detroit, the infant-mortality rate jumped from 19.8 deaths per 1,000 births in 1983 to 26.8 per 1,000 in 1984. The national figure was 10.9 deaths per 1,000 births in 1983.

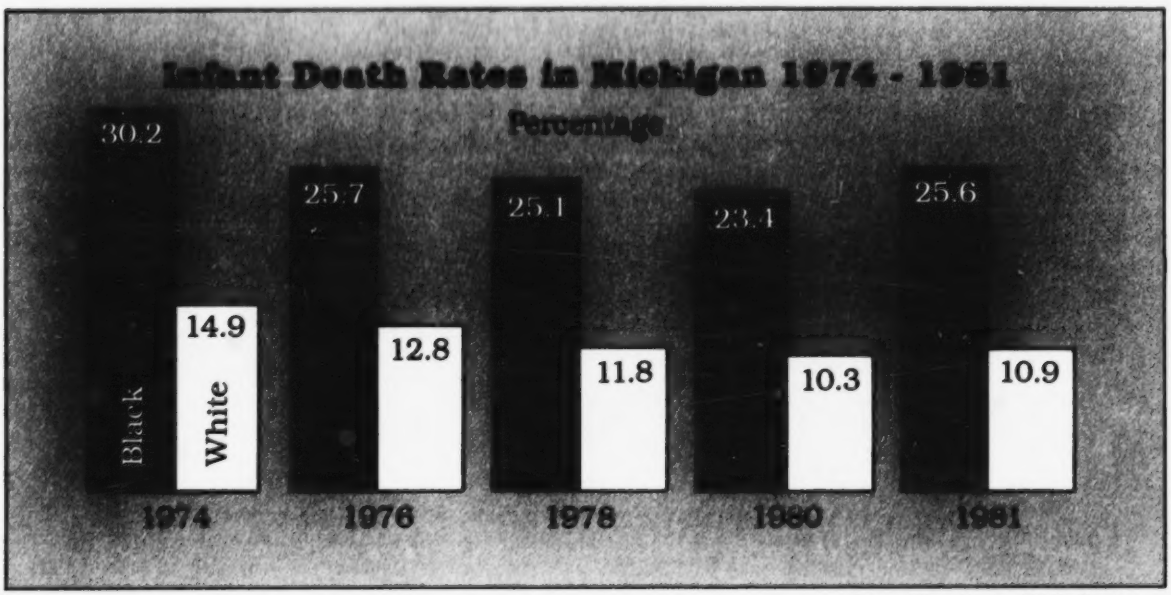
Participants in the forums cited several factors that contribute to such a high mortality rate for Black babies, including low income, inadequate health insurance and maternal education, inadequate prenatal care, poor nutrition, inadequate housing and crowded living conditions, disrupted families, transportation problems, and lack of child-care services.

Even when Black infants do survive birth, similar factors often cause problems that are tragic for families and a drain on taxpayers. Low-birthweight babies who live are three times more likely to have some type of neurological handicap, including mental retardation, cerebral palsy and seizure disorders.

Further, two recent studies conclude that 20 percent of low-birthweight infants who have handicaps will require more than $120,000 in special education and other extra costs during their lives.

Evidence is strong that something can be done to reduce infant problems. In Michigan, one of the most popular and highly used programs of the Department of Public Health is the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) supplemental food program, which provides nutrition counseling and issues coupons for specific foods.

A Harvard School of Public Health study found that each dollar spent on the WIC program for pregnant women averted about three dollars in medical costs for low-birthweight infants. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated in 1982 that savings to federal taxpayers would exceed $1 billion if the WIC program reached all eligible women.



Source: Office of Vital and Health Statistics
Michigan Dept. of Public Health

Figure VII.

Infant Death Rates in Michigan by Race for 1975 shows an improvement for both races until 1981 when infant death rates increased. Death rates for Black infants have been twice that of Whites since 1973.

Recommendations:

- **The Legislature** should appropriate state funds to supplement federal aid to expand the eligibility requirements of WIC to include all pregnant women and nursing mothers eligible for Medicaid or prenatal care funded by the Michigan Department of Public Health.
- **The Department of Public Health** should take the necessary steps to amend the Public Health Code to include prenatal care as a basic health service.

Mental Health

As bad as physical problems are for many Black children and youth in Michigan, mental health is also a serious concern for them and the entire state. Among the mental health problems discussed at the symposia are low self-esteem, child abuse, drug abuse, teen suicide, and crime and violence.

The poor self-image may be attributed to inadequate positive reinforcement by parents who have their own high levels of stress, a lack of positive Black role models, a lack of cultural history, and negative stereotyping by the media.

Many participants contended that television has taken on a major socializing role for children, but offers many negative stereotypes and a violent orientation.

Child Abuse:

Child abuse and family violence are among the most serious problems among distressed Black families. Black children were victims in 24 percent of the reported cases of child abuse and neglect in Michigan in 1985.

Income, education and cultural forces have been cited as factors that make racial minorities more likely to be singled out and labeled as deviants by those involved in the reporting process.

Child abuse, however, is a pattern of behavior that does not necessarily reflect an absence of love from abusive parents or caretakers. Abuse and lack of respect often are the result of stress or of methods used by adults who themselves were abused as children.

Additional prevention and intervention programs for high stress, high risk families are needed. Crisis centers are too few and understaffed. "Respite centers" are needed and were suggested by numerous mental health care providers. Such a community-based center would provide a temporary reprieve from the daily strains of raising children. Children would be in a positive temporary environment and parents would get support to help them reduce the stress that could result in abuse.

Substance Abuse:

According to recent polls, parents and students see drug misuse as the biggest problem facing this generation. Alcoholism and drug misuse not only impair the health of those who abuse these substances but also impose heavy costs on families and society as a whole.

For example, the leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 15 and 20 is drunk driving. Children and youth, in addition, often use several drugs in combination, posing serious health hazards to themselves.

Many poor Black children and families see participation in the underground drug economy as a means of financial survival, participants said. Actually, death and ruin are, instead, the frequent products of drug use or selling. Widespread drug use contributes to murder, other violent acts, property destruction and despair.

Teen Suicide:

Blacks historically have been less inclined than other racial groups to commit suicide, even under the oppression of slavery or discrimination. The disturbing situation now is that suicide among Black youth is increasing, although Black youngsters take their own lives with much less frequency than White youth.

Crime:

Among citizens within and outside of the Black community, crime and violence have come to symbolize the worst problems facing Blacks, especially the young.

Whatever the reasons, it must be said that crime is destroying a whole generation of our children. For example, it is a terrible fact that one in every 21 Black males will be murdered before the age of 24. In addition, a Black youth is seven times more likely to have a brush with the law.

Studies of the criminal justice system in Michigan, California and Texas found that judges impose heavier sentences on Blacks and Hispanics than on Whites with similar records, who are convicted of comparable felonies. In short, there is a definite difference in sentencing patterns for Blacks and Whites.

Many of the participants in the forums called for campaigns that denounce violence as portrayed in the media. Citizens also were concerned about the many products promoted by toy companies that equate violence and play as the same thing.

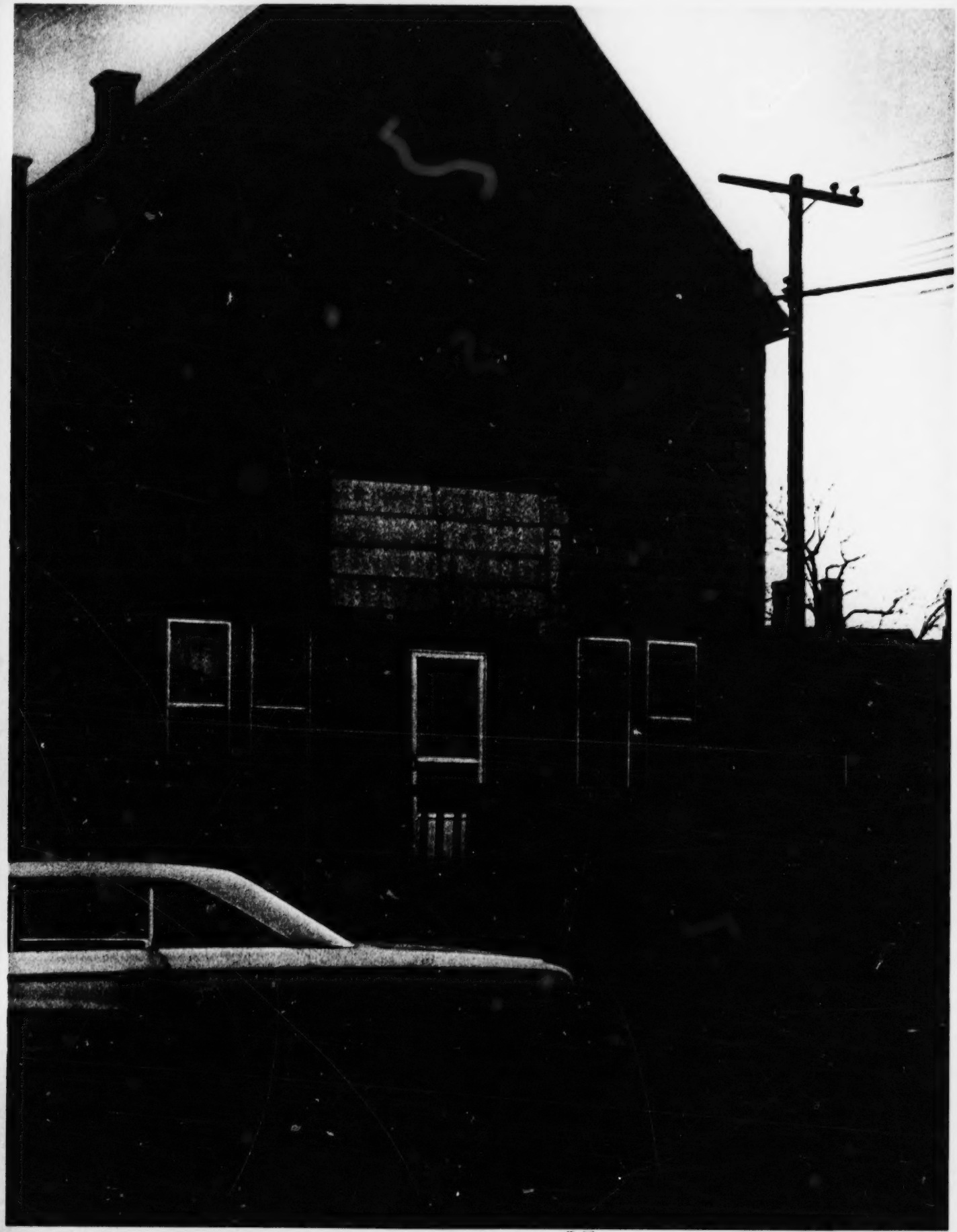
The citizens also frequently contended that the emphasis on Black crime is overportrayed while the large-scale impacts of white-collar and organized crimes, committed by those who are not poor Blacks, go virtually ignored.

Citizens especially were angry about the devastating impact of drug misuse on Black children and their families by kingpins who are making millions of dollars in drug trafficking.

Recommendations:

- **The State Police and Department of Corrections,** with the cooperation of local law enforcement agencies and courts, should develop a "Drug Bust" program aimed at children and youth who sell or distribute drugs.
- **The Governor's Human Services Cabinet** should develop a process coordinated through local agencies to ensure that "busted" children and youth, and their families, receive individual support and rehabilitative services.
- **The Department of Education,** working with **the Department of Mental Health,** should develop model educational programs for the school curriculum to teach students how to deal with stress, depression, anger and suicidal feelings.
- **The Department of Natural Resources** should plan with local parks and recreation departments to provide adequate neighborhood parks, playgrounds, neighborhood centers, and sports equipment.
- **The Department of Corrections** should work with the **Departments of Mental Health and Social Services** to implement a program of services for children of jailed parents.
- **The Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court** should convene a task force to review racial inequities in sentencing of Black youth and adults, and to provide a process to apply the judicial system more fairly to Blacks.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY: FIGHTING POVERTY, CREATING SELF-RESPECT

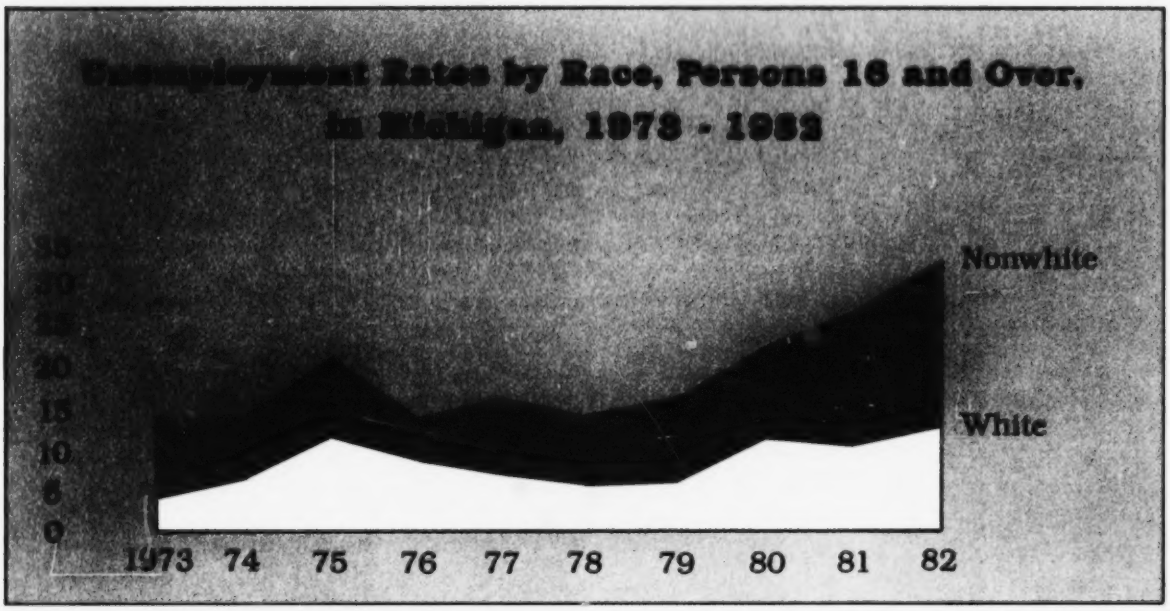


JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY: FIGHTING POVERTY, CREATING SELF-RESPECT

Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment

It is obvious that unemployment is the major contributing factor toward poverty. What is not so well appreciated is that a job not only provides income, but also enhances self-esteem and aspirations in families.

Black children, however, are about twice as likely as White children to have at least one parent unemployed and they are about three times as likely to have no parent employed.



Source: Mich. Employment Security Commission
Michigan Dept. of Labor

Figure VIII.

Unemployment by Race, Persons 16 and Over, in Michigan, 1973-1982 indicates that Nonwhite unemployment rate in Michigan has been more than twice that of White except for the years 1975 and 1976 when the gap narrowed slightly. In 1981, an unemployment study of persons 16-19 showed rates of 63.1 for Black youth, 22.3 for White.

In 1984, more than 53 percent of all Black families were maintained by women and 63 percent of such families with children under 18 years old had no employed person in the family. In addition, 19 percent of married Black couple-families had no employed person and 16 percent of all Black married couples with children under 18 had no employed person.

The federal government's definition of poverty is an income level of no more than $10,990 for a family of four. Using that standard, 31 percent of Blacks and 9.1 percent of Whites officially were below the poverty level.

Under that definition, for example, the city of Detroit had the highest poverty rate (30.6 percent) among the metropolitan areas in the central states.

Perhaps the most disheartening thing about such figures is that poverty has become so built into the system that it becomes a deeper and deeper hole for many Black families with every succeeding decade. Thus, poor families of the 1960s and 1970s are more likely to have offspring who are poor in the 1980s.

In other words, poverty is the only way of life many Black citizens have ever known as children and adults. Their children, in turn, are the expected poor in the 1990s.

Michigan's case is even worse than the national pattern. The nationwide recession of the early 1980s was a depression in Michigan because of its dependence on the crippled auto industry and related businesses.

Michigan industry has responded to its economic crisis by drastically streamlining and automating plants. That may be a necessary move for industry as a whole to survive and compete internationally, but the impact on Blacks is staggeringly bad.

After nearly three years of Michigan's economic recovery, Blacks still have not reached the same level of income that they had attained before the recession/depression.

The recent string of announcements of planned plant closings in Michigan pointedly demonstrates that the worse is not over for many workers. In fact, for them the worst is yet to come.

Most of the industrial jobs that have been lost—or soon will be—are the comparatively low-skilled positions. Many of the new "high-tech" jobs that are being created demand more education and training than many Blacks have. Many other new positions are service-industry jobs that pay much less in wages and essential benefits, such as medical insurance.

Forum participants were acutely aware of those situations. They said, over and over, that ways must be found to offer more jobs for Blacks and that the jobs should enable parents to provide a decent standard of living for their children.

Recommendations:

- **State Departments involved** should adopt a state policy to combat the high rate of joblessness among Michigan's Black citizens.
- **The Departments of Labor, Commerce, and Education** should jointly develop a Black Family Employability State Plan, with the primary goal of raising all Michigan families out of poverty.
- **The Legislature** should enact legislation on plant closings and business relocations to give communities greater flexibility in adjusting to long-term economic changes.
- **The Department of Civil Service, the Lieutenant Governor's office and Michigan Equal Employment and Business Opportunity Council** should set formal goals to hire and promote Blacks within state service, especially in light of early retirement programs that may create additional job opportunities. The Lieutenant Governor should work with state department directors to hire and promote Blacks at all classification levels.

Black Youth Unemployment

Unemployment among many groups of Blacks is a serious problem, but joblessness among Black youth in particular is disastrously high.

Black teenage (age 16-18) unemployment rates consistently have topped 50 percent since 1975. During the third quarter of 1983—when the severe recession supposedly was winding down—Black youth unemployment in Michigan hit 73 percent, compared with 18.1 percent for White youth.

Close to two-thirds of Michigan's Black youth are still, today, without gainful employment. The situation furnishes kindling for staggering problems for Black youth and Michigan society generally. Desperation, crime and taxpayer burdens are all ignited by such soaring unemployment rates.

It is sometimes assumed that a similar picture has existed for several decades or longer. Actually, the high degree of Black youth unemployment is a relatively new phenomenon that has accelerated rapidly within the past two decades. As recently as 1960, the differences between White and Black unemployment rates were not significant. Older non-Whites and White youth had relatively equivalent chances for at least some kind of employment. Yet, within the following 10 years, their rates of employment differed more than 35 percent.

There also is an assumption that many youth without jobs simply are lazy idlers or students casually looking for work to supplement their incomes. The facts show differently. Most unemployed youth are out-of-school youth who average more than 30 weeks of joblessness each year.

Citizens at the forums also disputed the widespread notion that minimum-wage laws keep many employers from hiring youth. Actually, almost a fourth of all non-supervisory workers already are exempt from minimum-wage laws, the highest proportion ever.

The unemployment of so many Black youth therefore does not result from either an alleged half-hearted motivation or from structural problems inherent in a modern, changing economy. Instead, for reasons of race, little education or poor skills, many employers simply see Black youth to be less desirable than workers of other races.

Forum participants especially were distressed that more and more of Michigan's "hard core" jobless youth resort to crime for survival. As a minority youth gradually learns that—for him—work is a myth, the lure of crime and drugs can only grow, devouring even more young people.

Many reasons for youth unemployment were discussed in the forums, but the deepest concern was over the severe problem of illiteracy. There was unanimous agreement that illiterate students should neither be promoted nor permitted to graduate from Michigan's public schools.

Recommendations:

- **The Legislature** should oppose sub-minimum wage policies for youth.
- **The Legislature and Departments of Labor and Education** should ensure that all state youth-employment programs include education, training and work.
- **The Department of Civil Rights, the directors of other departments, the Legislature and the Lieutenant Governor's Office** should set guidelines and measureable standards to ensure that civil rights and affirmative-action mandates are understood and enforced.
- **The Department of Education** should require local school districts to implement basic academic programs that prepare Black students for useful jobs, including intensive remedial efforts.
- **The Legislature, Departments of Labor and Commerce** and the private sector must insure through increased affirmative-action efforts that more disadvantaged Black youth are hired and trained for good jobs.
- **The Departments of Education, Labor, and Commerce** should promote development of private-industry, "Adopt-A-School" programs.
- **The Legislature, and Departments of Labor and Civil Service** should increase internship and apprenticeship opportunities for Black students and adults interested in careers in state government.

Assistance Subsidies

As crucial as is the need for more and better jobs, it is a sad fact that many poor families must rely now on welfare subsidies. The welfare system, many citizens agreed, needs a complete overhaul, not mere fine-tuning.

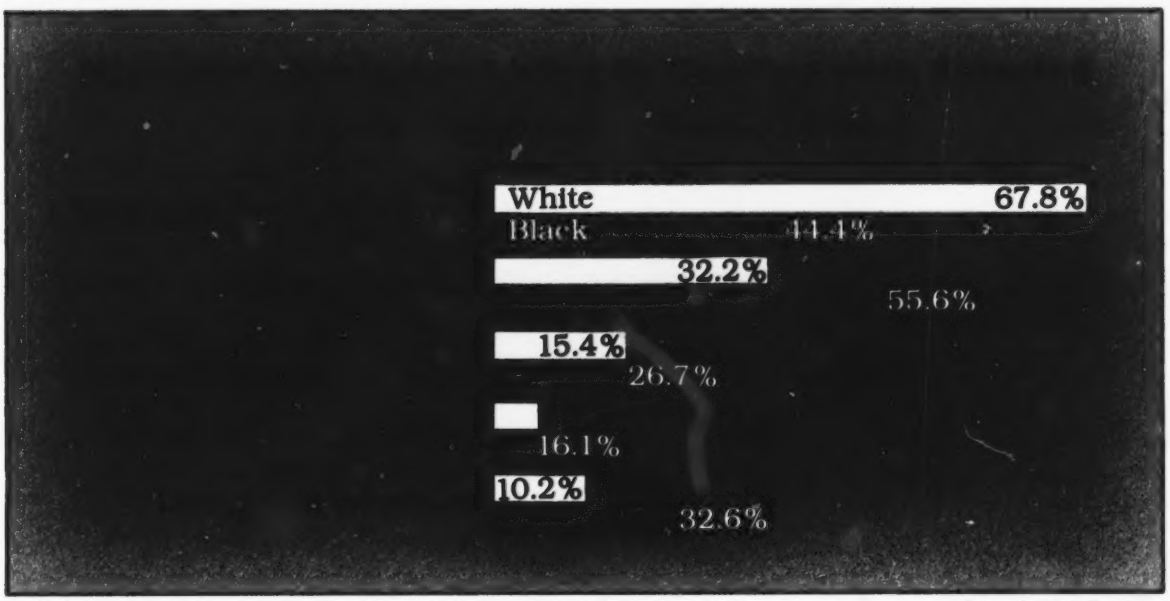
One practical step suggested is to keep husbands or other supportive men in the home. Men ought not to be forced to leave a home so that women may receive welfare benefits. Michigan must follow the lead of some other states, where welfare programs allow non-working men to stay with their families without affecting Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) payments. Children need the love and examples of both parents in the home as much as they need food and clothing.

Another concern is child care and how state subsidies might enable parents to work. Citizens felt that Michigan must develop policies that expand and reward educational and training efforts taken by welfare recipients.

Some forum participants also were disturbed about the cultural insensitivity of some Department of Social Services (DSS) employees. Training programs for DSS employees that enable them to learn more about Black culture and life styles are necessary.

Recommendations:

- **The Departments of Labor, Social Services, Public Health, Commerce, and Education** should establish a state income-security system with the following elements:
  —Adequate and equitable benefits;
  —Benefits not conditional on work;
  —No stigmas on benefits;
  —Benefits indexed for inflation.
- **The Legislature and the Department of Social Services** should eliminate public-assistance rules that hinder Black economic independence and the ability of Black families to stay intact.
- **The Governor's Human Services Cabinet** should adopt child-care policies that provide low-cost or no-cost care so that parents can work or participate in job-training or education programs. The care should be educational and developmental, not merely custodial.



Source: Bureau of Census
U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Figure IX.

Michigan Population Living in Housing with Selected Characteristics by Race, 1980 indicates that three times as many Black families have no car or no telephone than White families. The median value of the Black-owned homes was $27,200 in 1980, that of the White-owned homes was $48,600.

Housing

The double bind of poverty and discrimination suffered by many Black families is evident in poor housing quality and location. High costs for housing, energy and transportation severely handicap Black families.

Black children are twice as likely as White children to live in inadequate housing. Depending on home ownership or rental, a fourth or a third of children, respectively, live in older, crowded, dilapidated housing.

It is ironic that families with better incomes can afford measures that lower their heating bills, while among many Black families, poor insulation leads to high heating costs, and faulty wiring results in many fire-related accidents and deaths.

Forum participants concluded that Blacks in Michigan do not have equal access to housing. In spite of the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 and Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1977, most Black Michiganians still live in racially isolated housing.

Recommendations:

- **The Legislature and the Department of Commerce** should expand the Fair Housing Act to specifically include families with children.
- **The Department of Commerce** should review policies to ensure that families have safe, sanitary, energy-efficient housing.
- **State and local building codes** should be revised to permit the economy of mass production with the use of new materials, extensive prefabrication and modern construction methods.
- **The Legislature and Department of Commerce** should create a special lending pool to enable low-income families to buy homes.

Transportation

Even when Blacks might have the opportunity for employment, job location and available transportation often hamper them. The largest number of new jobs in Michigan today is being created in the suburbs where, another irony, unemployment is lowest.

Citizens at the forums called for transportation to provide inner-city workers with the means of reaching suburban jobs. Subsidizing transportation is less expensive in the long run than is spending taxpayer money on welfare and jails.

Recommendation:

- **The Department of Transportation,** in conjunction with other state departments, should encourage policies in private business and industry to provide transportation for employees and trainees who need such help.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The many people who have devoted so much time and concern in developing the report and recommendations agree on two key points: The Black child is in crisis, and it is a crisis that cannot be defused unless all the causes and potential remedies are tackled together.

In seven public forums around the state last year the many citizen participants found themselves discussing basically the same conditions of poverty, racism and ignorance that are fueling the crisis.

The citizens' conclusions and recommendations, along with the latest available research data, have been streamlined and consolidated by the Michigan Interagency Committee on the Black Child. The committee—composed of representatives of the several state departments that have provided funds and staff for the project—has met periodically since the forums to consider the findings and adopt final recommendations.

This final report is an action plan to help citizens, their governments, and community organizations join in finding ways to aid the many Michigan children in peril.

So many problems affecting the Black child entangle one another that it is impossible to provide tidy distinctions on all issues. As far as is practical, though, the report and 118 recommendations are grouped into four main areas: Family, Education, Health Care, and Employment.

Here are key findings and recommendations to state and local agencies or community groups for the four areas:

THE FAMILY: STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

The Black child faces a crisis before he or she is even born. Many have mothers who are young, poor and uneducated. Fathers often are absent from the family. The result is that Black infant mortality is on the rise, and those children who do survive often suffer malnutrition, child abuse, or a lack of loving discipline and standards.

Among major findings:

- Black teens are twice as likely as White teens to become pregnant and are more likely to have the child. Black teens account for 27.9 percent of all births to teens, and for 47.3 percent of all births to unmarried teens.
- Black children, regardless of age, are more likely than White children to have working mothers. Black mothers tend to enter or return to the labor force when their children are younger and they are more likely to work full time.
- Many Black children are placed in foster care and surrendered for adoption. Too many children and youth are left without the stability of a secure family environment or permanent relationship.

Recommendations:

The forum participants and committee conclude that more ways must be found to allow Black families to stay together and to tackle the problems of pregnant teens and of juveniles in trouble with the law. Among the recommendations are:

- Fund a 10-year state-government commitment to analyze and treat issues concerning the Black family and child.

- Develop practical options to teen pregnancy and parenthood through state agencies and community education.
- Provide cooperative day care and preschool programs in their homes for low-income families.
- Place a priority on home-based prevention services and consider removal of children only as a last resort.

EDUCATION: THE WAY OUT AND UP

Michigan's Black student achievement at all levels is of crisis proportion. Dreams of success evaporate into hopelessness or bitterness without education that prepares Black children for worthwhile jobs. Among the findings:

- Many Black children already are so far behind in development when they start regular school that they never catch up.
- A lack of reading skills is the most critical problem. Too many Black pupils, though, are promoted to a higher grade in spite of failure to learn basic reading skills.
- There are urban Michigan school districts where it is estimated that 30 to 60 percent of students entering the ninth grade fail to graduate four years later.
- At a time when all students need more education or training beyond high school, Black student enrollment in Michigan colleges has dropped from 11 percent in 1976 to 9 percent in 1984.

Recommendations:

- Provide free, quality day-care and preschool education for preschool children considered likely to have major problems.
- Promote pupils only when they master course content, especially reading skills.
- Include parents and students in the selection of school district superintendent and building administrators.
- Work cooperatively with school districts and community organizations to recruit more Black youth for colleges and provide follow-up help to those who enroll.

HEALTH: A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

There is a wide gap between the well-being of Black and White children and their families. Problems in physical and mental health often are triggered by poverty, ignorance, crime and discrimination. Among the findings:

- One in every 21 Black males can expect to be murdered before the age of 24, and a Black youth is seven times more likely to have a brush with the law.
- The poor must cope with high-priced health care, inadequate transportation systems, insensitive physicians and long waits for service.
- In 1981, Black infants died at twice the rate of White infants in Michigan, and the gap worsened in 1986. The infant-mortality rate now is higher than in most Western European countries and rivals that of many Third World nations.

Recommendations:

- Provide state-paid physicians, dentists, psychiatrists and other health professionals to practice in high-risk and underserved urban and rural areas.
- Adopt a statewide health-insurance plan free of any deductibles or co-insurance for all residents.
- Develop joint state and local "Drug Bust" programs aimed at children and youth who sell or distribute drugs.
- Review racial inequities in sentencing of Black youth and adults and provide a process to apply fairly the court system to Blacks.

JOBS & ECONOMIC SECURITY:
FIGHTING POVERTY, CREATING SELF-RESPECT

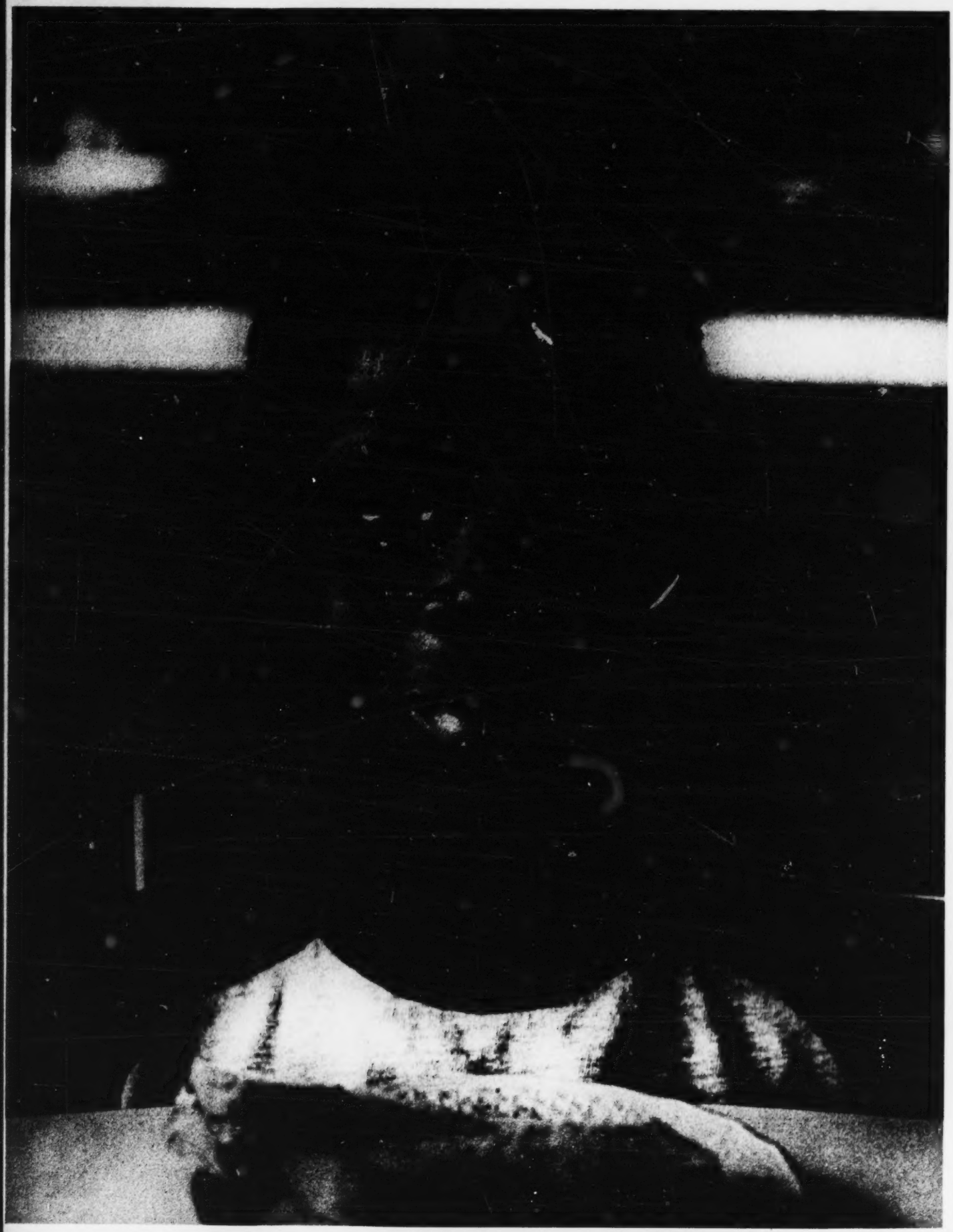
Unemployment is, obviously, the major contributing factor toward poverty and, less directly, toward crime and poor physical and mental health. Among the findings:

- The Black poverty rate is triple that of Whites and the jobless rate is double.
- Close to two-thirds of Michigan's Black youth are without gainful employment, with a Black youth almost three times more likely to be unemployed than a White youth.

Recommendations:

- Require school districts to prepare Black students for jobs, including intensive remedial efforts.
- Increase affirmative-action programs so that more disadvantaged Black youth are hired and trained for good jobs.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FAMILY: STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

1. **The Governor, Legislature and co-sponsoring Departments** should support formation of a pilot, community-based Black Child and Family Institute. The institute should coordinate activities and research in the four areas of health, family, education and employment. The institute should be monitored by a commission appointed by the Governor.
2. **The Governor** should appoint a statewide interagency committee to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the recommendations and the activities of the state agencies in their responses to the Report of the Public Forums and Symposia on the Black Child in Crisis.
3. **The Legislature** should make a 10-year funding commitment to analyze, manage and treat issues concerning the Black family and child.
4. **The Legislature and Departments of Commerce and Social Services** should expand rent-supplement programs and low-interest rate programs for homesteading by poor families.
5. **The Department of Corrections and the Courts** should establish an independent monitoring committee to ensure fairness and consistency in sentencing of Black defendents.
6. **The Department of Transportation** should conduct a study every two years on the affordability and accessibility of public transportation to major agencies and businesses in cities and suburbs.
7. **The Departments of Public Health, Education and Social Services** should develop community education and outreach efforts to present clearly the problems of teenage parenthood and to develop practical options to pregnancy and parenthood for adolescents.
8. **The Departments of Social Services and Education** should provide for low-income families to operate cooperative day-care and preschool programs in their homes.
9. **The Department of Social Services** should place a priority on home-based prevention services and consider removal of children only as a last resort.
10. **The Department of Social Services** should remove deterrents to the reunification of families.
11. **The Department of Social Services** should increase the child-care reimbursement rate for AFDC recipients to the approximate costs of the care.
12. **The Department of Social Services** should implement programs to encourage Black families to consider adopting Black children.
13. **The Department of Social Services** should develop policies to reduce the duration of foster-home care.
14. **The Departments involved** should remove from their procedures and documents the phrase "illegitimate child."

EDUCATION: THE WAY OUT AND UP

Preschool and Early Childhood Education

15. **The Department of Education** should provide for affordable and accessible preschool and early childhood education programs for working and single parents.

16. **The Governor's Human Services Cabinet** should develop a state plan for preschool children at risk (those considered likely to have major education problems) that would include quality, free, day-care and preschool education.
17. **The Legislature** should expand the state-aid formula to include per capita funding for education for at-risk and low-income preschool children.
18. **The Department of Education** should convene a committee to develop practical, affordable and accessible *private* alternative preschool programs for children not served under Headstart and other state and federally funded programs. The committee should include representatives from a range of business, civic, church and government agencies and groups.
19. **Local school districts** should use competent Black students from high schools and colleges as volunteer tutors to serve as role models.
20. **Local school districts** should train and encourage parents to reinforce the child's preschool activities at home and to participate in the planning for children already in school.

Kindergarten-Elementary Education

21. **Local school districts** should promote pupils only when they master course content.
22. **Local school districts** should provide in-service training to teachers on test administration.
23. **Local school districts** should adopt plans to ensure that students are taught reading in *all* classrooms.
24. **Local school districts** should ensure that teacher and administrator expectations of students are high and realistic.
25. **Local school districts** should recruit parent volunteers to work in school buildings during the regular school day.
26. **Local school districts** should increase efforts to employ Black male teachers in kindergarten and elementary grades.

Secondary Education

27. **The State Board of Education and the Department of Education** should "adopt" a high school that largely serves Black students where there is a disproportionate number of low-achieving, at-risk students and provide special technical assistance to that school.
28. **Local school districts** should require reading instruction for all high school students who are reading below grade level.
29. **Local school districts** should encourage all students to take national assessment examinations *before* their senior year and provide test-preparation instructions.
30. **Local school districts** should develop partnership programs with local businesses.
31. **Local school districts** should discourage requests for rigid "tracking" and placement of students.
32. **Local school districts** should provide programs to encourage school-age parents to remain in school.

Curriculum

33. **Local school districts** should provide child-care programs in the school so that school-age mothers can continue their education.
34. **The State Board of Education** should allow reimbursement for the transportation needs of teenaged parents.
35. **Local school districts** should form a committee to monitor Black children at risk, including school practices of suspension, expulsion and dropouts.
36. **Local school districts** should promote the positive attributes of vocational education and inform parents of the benefits of vocational and technical education as preparation for careers.

37. **Local school districts** should expand course offerings to include classes on sex education, parenting, nutrition and health, African-American history and culture, family economics, personal and interpersonal skills, and test preparation.
38. **Local school districts** should reduce class sizes and provide tutors for students.

Special Education

39. **The State Board of Education** should increase the requirements for teacher certification in special education to include courses on multi-cultural education or courses on African-American history and culture.
40. **Local school districts** should evaluate the validity of assessment criteria that result in the overrepresentation of Black students in special education classes.
41. **Local school districts** should offer more ways to integrate special education pupils into the general student body.
42. **Local school districts** should establish a panel of teachers, parents and community persons to review the initial assessment for placement and to monitor regularly the progress of students placed in special education.

School Dropouts

43. **The Legislature** should amend the State School Code to include a uniform definition of a school dropout.
44. **The Legislature** should require each school district to establish a committee to plan and monitor dropout-prevention programs and report results annually to the State Board of Education.
45. **The Legislature** should increase funding for programs in dropout prevention.
46. **The State Board of Education** should establish a School Dropout Prevention Committee to explore new approaches, with members drawn from community, civic, church and parent groups.
47. **The State Board of Education** should analyze the effect of the compulsory school attendance law on the dropout problem.
48. **Local school districts** should eliminate school practices that "push students out."
49. **The Department of Education,** with the assistance of **the Michigan Department of Civil Rights,** should monitor the suspension and expulsion of minority students.
50. **Local school districts** should work with local departments of parks and recreation to establish after-school programs aimed at keeping Black youth in organized activities during their leisure time.
51. **The Legislature** should sponsor a legislative conference on school dropouts and invite participants from states that receive legislative support for dropout prevention.

School Management

52. **Local school boards and districts** should set short and long-range plans that clearly state the goals for Black student achievement.
53. **Local school boards and districts** should include parents and students in the selection of the district superintendent and building administrators.
54. **Local school boards and districts** should require principals and central office administrators to develop annual action plans for improving Black student achievement.
55. **Local school boards and districts** should report annually to the community on the education progress of all students by race and sex.

Teachers

56. **The State Board of Education** should develop a plan to recruit more Blacks into teaching.

57. **The State Board of Education** should appoint Black educators, psychologists and citizens to the committee that develops competency tests for teachers and school administrators.
58. **The State Board of Education** should change the teacher certification rules to require all prospective teachers to have courses in African-American history and culture.
59. **Local school districts** should provide in-service programs for current teachers and staff to increase their understanding of children from various backgrounds and cultures.

School Finance

60. **The State Board of Education** should appoint a blue-ribbon committee to study and make recommendations to improve school finance.
61. **The State Board of Education** should mount a campaign to inform citizens on the need for school-finance reform.
62. **The Legislature** should appropriate more funds for general-assistance aid to schools to decrease the dependence on local property taxes.
63. **The Legislature** should continue the task force that is working with the **Department of Education** to develop a program to fund school districts based on needs and resources.

Parent and Community Involvement

64. **The local school and community** should initiate performance contracts with parents, teachers and principals.
65. **The State Board of Education** should develop guidelines on how school districts and communities can work cooperatively to build excellent education programs.
66. **The State Board of Education** should recognize exemplary school-community relations programs.
67. **Every school** should be used as a community multi-purpose activity center.
68. **The local school and community** should develop outreach programs, such as home visits by teachers, principals and other support staff.
69. **Local schools and the community** should establish student advocacy programs and use community volunteers to build the self-esteem and positive self-image of Black students.
70. **The local school and community** should initiate partnerships with corporations and business to provide job opportunities for poor school-age parents.
71. **The local school and community** should form partnerships with churches, social and fraternal organizations for "Adopt-A-School" programs.
72. **The local school and community** should establish a committee to explore alternatives to having uniformed police officers in the school building.

Higher Education

73. **Community Colleges and Universities** should work with school districts, community, civic and religious groups to recruit Black youth.
74. **Community Colleges and Universities** should work with school districts to provide counseling and mentor relationships between faculty and students, and to provide campus visitation programs.
75. **Community Colleges and Universities** should establish goals and timelines for improving Black student enrollment and retention.
76. **Colleges of Education** should provide opportunities in teacher-training programs to help prepare future teachers to work directly with students likely to have major problems.
77. **The Department of Education, the Legislature, Colleges and Universities** should fully implement the 1986 *Report on Minorities, Handicappers and Women in Michigan's Colleges and Universities* by the State Superintendent's Special Advisory Committee.

HEALTH: A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

Accessibility

78. **The Governor** should improve coordination among state agencies in administering existing programs for improving the health of Blacks and to increase the availability of health professionals to Blacks.
79. **The Departments of Public Health and Mental Health** should work with the state Office of Medical Affairs to develop an accessibility plan that assures that community health and mental health care service centers are established in low-income neighborhoods.
80. **The Governor, Legislature and Departments of Public Health and Mental Health** should provide state-paid physicians, dentists, psychiatrists and other health professionals to practice in high-risk and underserved urban and rural areas.
81. **The Department of Transportation** should consider providing low-cost or free transportation to health and mental health facilities for low-income people.
82. **The Department of Public Health**, with the help of county health departments, should adopt an outreach campaign for minority populations to furnish health information and education materials.
83. **The Governor** should direct the Office of Medical Affairs to develop a statewide comprehensive health-insurance plan free of any deductibles or co-insurance for all residents.

Blacks in the Health Field

84. **State Departments, professional organizations and Colleges and Universities** should develop a program to recruit Blacks and other minority persons for careers in health and mental health care.
85. **The Legislature, Department of Education and Colleges** should increase financial aid to minority students through scholarships and low-interest loans for those entering medical school or health-related fields.

Preventive Medicine

86. **The Governor** should issue a clear and comprehensive policy on prevention in health and mental health, accompanied by objectives and schedules, and the **Legislature** should appropriate the necessary funds to support it.
87. **The Department of Mental Health** should cease its approval of waivers for prevention services now granted to community health boards for prevention services.
88. **The Legislature** should appropriate funds to allow health screening annually for low-income and other children at risk.

Hunger and Nutrition

89. **The Governor** should convene a Task Force on Hunger to determine the number of hungry and nutritionally poor children in Michigan and devise a response that will assure that all children get an adequate diet.
90. **The U.S. Department of Agriculture** should expand its efforts and develop a plan to ensure that surplus foods are provided to all children in need.
91. **State Departments** should launch a statewide campaign to make food-stamp recipients aware of the best ways to use nutrition benefits.

Infant Mortality

92. **The Legislature** should appropriate state funds to supplement federal aid to expand the eligibility requirements of the Women, Infant and Children nutritional program (WIC) to

include all pregnant women and nursing mothers eligible for Medicaid or prenatal care funded by the Department of Public Health.

93. **The Department of Public Health** should take the necessary steps to amend the Public Health Code to include prenatal care as a basic health service.

Mental Health

94. **The State Police and Department of Corrections,** with the cooperation of local law enforcement agencies and courts, should develop a "Drug Bust" program aimed at children and youth who sell or distribute drugs.
95. **The Governor's Human Services Cabinet** should develop a process coordinated through local agencies to ensure that "busted" children and youth, and their families, received individual support and rehabilitative services.
96. **The Department of Education** working with the **Department of Mental Health** should develop model educational programs for the school curriculum to teach students how to deal with stress, depression and anger.
97. **The Department of Natural Resources** should plan with local parks and recreation departments to provide adequate neighborhood parks, playgrounds, neighborhood centers, and sports equipment.
98. **The Department of Corrections** should work with the **Departments of Mental Health and Social Services** to implement a program of services for children of jailed parents.
99. **The Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court** should convene a task force to review racial inequities in sentencing of Black youth and adults, and to provide a process to apply the judicial system more fairly to Blacks.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY: FIGHTING POVERTY, CREATING SELF-RESPECT

Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment

100. **State Departments involved** should adopt a state policy to combat the high rate of unemployment among Michigan's Black citizens.
101. **The Departments of Labor, Commerce, and Education** should jointly develop a Black Family Employability State Plan, with the primary goal of raising all Michigan families out of poverty.
102. **The Legislature** should enact legislation on plant closings and business relocations to give communities greater flexibility in adjusting to long-term economic changes.
103. **The Department of Civil Service, the Lieutenant Governor's Office and Michigan Equal Employment and Business Opportunity Council** should set formal goals to hire and promote Blacks within state service, especially in light of early retirement programs that may create additional job opportunities. The Lieutenant Governor should work with state department directors to hire and promote Blacks at all classification levels.

Black Youth Unemployment

104. **The Legislature** should oppose sub-minimum wage policies for youth.
105. **The Legislature and Departments of Labor and Education** should ensure that all state youth-unemployment programs include education, training and work.
106. **The Department of Civil Rights, the directors of other departments, the Legislature, and the Lieutenant Governor's Office** should set guidelines and measurable standards to ensure that civil rights and affirmative-action mandates are understood and enforced.
107. **The Department of Education** should require local school districts to implement basic academic programs that prepare Black students for employment, including intensive remedial efforts.

108. **The Legislature, Departments of Labor and Commerce and the private sector** must insure through increased affirmative-action efforts that more disadvantaged Black youth are hired and trained for good jobs.

109. **The Departments of Education, Labor, and Commerce** should promote development of private-industry, "Adopt-A-School" programs.

110. **The Legislature, and Departments of Labor and Civil Service** should increase internship and apprenticeship opportunities for Black students and adults interested in careers in state government.

Assistance Subsidies

111. **The Departments of Labor, Social Services, Public Health, Commerce and Education** should establish a state income-security system with the following elements:
—Adequate and equitable benefits;
—Benefits not conditional on work;
—No stigmas on benefits;
—Benefits indexed for inflation.

112. **The Legislature and the Department of Social Services** should eliminate public-assistance rules that hinder Black economic independence and the ability of Black families to stay intact.

113. **The Governor's Human Services Cabinet** should adopt child-care policies that provide low-cost or no-cost care so that parents can work or participate in job-training or education programs. The care should be educational and developmental, not merely custodial.

Housing

114. **The Legislature and the Department of Commerce** should expand the Fair Housing Act to specifically include families with children.

115. **The Department of Commerce** should review policies to insure that families have safe, sanitary, energy-efficient housing.

116. **State and local building codes** should be revised to permit the economy of mass production with the use of new materials, extensive prefabrication and modern construction methods.

117. **The Legislature and Department of Commerce** should create a special lending pool to enable low-income families to buy homes.

Transportation

118. **The Department of Transportation,** in conjunction with other state departments, should encourage policies in private business and industry to provide transportation for employees and trainees who need such help.

APPENDIX A

The Black Child in Crisis Statewide Conference

THE BLACK CHILD IN CRISIS
STATE CONFERENCE

October 21, 1986 | **The Clarion Hotel** | **Lansing, Michigan**

AGENDA

8:30 a.m. **REGISTRATION**

9:30 a.m. **CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTION OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**
Barbara Roberts Mason, Conference Convener

WELCOME, CONFERENCE PURPOSE, PRESENTATION OF DECLARATION
Martha W. Griffiths, Lieutenant Governor, State of Michigan

REMARKS
C. Patrick Babcock, Conference Co-Chairperson
Phillip E. Runkel, Conference Co-Chairperson

INTRODUCTION OF DEPARTMENT SPONSORS FOR THE BLACK CHILD IN CRISIS PUBLIC FORUMS, SYMPOSIA, AND CONFERENCE

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC FORUMS AND SYMPOSIA ON THE BLACK CHILD IN CRISIS TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE PEOPLE OF MICHIGAN
Barbara Roberts Mason

THE GOVERNOR SPEAKS
James J. Blanchard, Governor, State of Michigan

PANEL: "The Black Child in Crisis: Issues, Perspectives, Solutions"
Moderator: Joe Stroud, Editor, The Detroit Free Press
Family and Child: Harriet Pipes McAdoo, Professor, Howard University
Health: Vernice Davis-Anthony, Director, Wayne County Health Department
Mental Health: Charles Warfield, Professor, Western Michigan University
Schooling and Education: Edward Simpkins, Professor, Wayne State University
Employment and Economic Security: Charles Mitchner, President, Michigan Council of Urban Leagues

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH**

1:00 p.m. **INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER**
Gloria R. Smith, Director, Department of Public Health

"The Black Child in Crisis"
Joseph McMillan, Assistant Provost, University of Louisville

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE
Gary Owen, Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, State of Michigan
John Engler, Majority Leader of the Senate, The Senate, State of Michigan
Betty Howe, Director, Department of Labor

3:00 p.m. **CLOSING REMARKS** and **ADJOURNMENT**
Barbara Roberts Mason

Remarks

James J. Blanchard

Governor
State of Michigan

Thank you, Barbara, for this report and all the deliberation and dedication it represents.

I speak often about the people of Michigan being our state's most valuable resource.

This report is a good example of why.

It reflects the thoughts and concerns about the black child in crisis of more than 3,000 citizens throughout the state.

And because these citizens cared enough to take part in the black child in crisis symposiums they are making Michigan a stronger, more compassionate, more responsive state to live in.

They have made this document credible and compelling and have created the impetus for action.

I thank you for your important role in this process.

Now let's talk about children—and specifically those black children who are most vulnerable and most at risk in today's society.

I am pleased that you have focused on understanding the child in relation to his family, whatever structure or form the family takes.

If children feel secure and supported by their family, they can thrive no matter what other problems exist.

The statistics you cite are appalling—that half of all black children now live in female-headed households and that most of these children live in poverty.

It is also disturbing that our past social policies have been focused on taking the child out of a family setting that seems at risk rather than trying to support both the child and the family within the family settings.

I am pleased that we are focusing our policies toward supporting and preserving families.

And we have begun that focus with jobs.

The black child needs parents who work.

This point is made quite clear at the beginning of this report.

The black child will need to find work as he or she becomes older.

Our health and mental health are determined by our jobs.

The kind and quality of education we receive greatly influence our ability to find and maintain a job.

The linkage between jobs and the stability of the family is clear.

So the jobs initiative we began in 1983 will continue and expand with more conscious attention to the special needs of black males . . . youth . . . and others at risk.

I have already proposed to the Legislature an expanded Michigan Youth Corps that will guarantee a job next summer to every Michigan youth who wants one.

Under a new pilot program this year Youth Corps workers who had not completed high school got the help they needed to receive their GED.

We also expanded our other job training programs such as the Michigan Conservation Corps . . . Project Self-Reliance and Grant Diversion to create more job experiences and private sector job opportunities.

But we need to do more.

We will be working to provide more job training and jobs—especially in our urban areas.

I recognize that the barriers to acquiring and maintaining employment are many, including:

—lack of employable skills to get jobs.

—inadequate schooling.

—inability to access child care . . . health care . . . and adequate transportation.

I have asked the Blue Ribbon Commission on Welfare Reform—chaired by Bobby Crim and Elliott Hall—to perform two key tasks:

—Look closely at our education, employment and training programs.

—And recommend to me the most effective way to address these barriers and assist individuals toward economic self-sufficiency.

Beyond the jobs initiative we have begun to explore other ways to strengthen families.

We have begun a family reunification pilot project to provide shelther . . . transportation and other services to families whose children are in foster care in order to expedite an early return home.

We have begun a family intervention program to involve both the child and his family in counseling efforts.

We have developed a One Church-One Family program.

This program is designed to help stabilize and give improved service to children in foster care and adoption—focusing primarily on the black church and the black child.

We are also expanding the Family Support Subsidy program to assist families with handicapped children to keep their children at home rather than in institutional settings.

We have developed a preventive services for families program.

We will continue to concentrate our efforts on strengthening the family unit as well as prevent removal of children from their homes.

Along with rebuilding the economy and creating jobs we have put strong emphasis on strengthening education.

We've increased state support for K-12 education by more than 50 percent.

We also have begun to expect more . . . demand more and work to achieve greater student . . . teacher . . . and school performance.

And with this new emphasis comes the realization of the educational performance gap that exists between black and white students.

We must mobilize all our resources—starting with the family and the local community—to help black children and others at risk in meeting these new educational demands.

One approach I strongly endorse is to fund a preschool program for children at risk.

This investment in four-year-olds—as demonstrated at the nationally acclaimed Perry School in Ypsilanti—will prevent costly learning disabilities and joblessness later in life.

As the report indicates we need to be responding in more creative ways to the educational needs of black children than just adding them to special education classes.

We also need to work harder on prevention of school dropouts.

As I reviewed the recommendations on health and mental health I was struck by the seriousness of the problem.

Black children are twice as likely as white children to have no regular source of health care and are twice as likely to be more seriously ill when they do see a doctor.

My Human Services Cabinet has been looking very closely at a number of these issues.

—They have been involved in planning activities with over a dozen organizations—including the Greater Detroit Area Health Council and the Michigan Hospital Association—to address the issue of access to health care for the uninsured and underinsured.

—They have jointly funded and coordinated the Michigan Model on School Health Curriculum.

One theme in this model is substance abuse prevention.

—With Dr. Gloria Smith's leadership an infant mortality task force has reconvened to develop specific ways to further reduce the rate of infant mortality.

One subcommittee is specifically addressing minority issues such as the need for culturally sensitive health professionals.

We have, however, begun a number of efforts to reduce infant mortality.

Last year we started a pre-natal/post partum care program which assisted 2,500 low-income, uninsured women into care . . . provided pre-natal teaching . . . and medical care.

For fiscal 1986 we served 6,000 women—meeting our target and doubling last year's effort.

We also developed community projects aimed at making women aware of available care.

To address the comprehensive health services needed by adolescents we have developed a five-year plan to introduce school-based health centers in high risk schools around the state.

As Governor I am committed to improving the lives of children and their families who are in need.

And we'll do it by putting in place the supportive services that will strengthen the family structure as well as encourage the movement toward independence for adult members of the family.

In addition to the services already mentioned I would also add:

—Providing health benefits . . . child care and transportation for single parents.

—Supporting innovative ways to develop health care coverage for the uninsured and under-insured.

—And expanding outreach efforts.

My Human Services Cabinet—concerned about the number of critical issues related to children and the fragmentation of the programs serving children and youth—advised me to create a position of a children's advocate.

That has been done.

I am fortunate to have Michael Murphy serving as children's advocate.

And he has been doing an outstanding job coordinating opportunities, programs and services for children.

We know there is much more to be done for our children, youth and families in need—especially the black child and the black family.

There are no simple answers to the problems which black children and other at-risk children face in Michigan.

Family disintegration . . . the past recession . . . and poverty have multiple causes and it will take multiple solutions to address them.

Together the Executive Office . . . the Legislature . . . local officials . . . community groups . . . the clergy . . . and parents can make a difference providing a better quality of life for our children.

All of you who have participated in the Black Child in Crisis project have my thanks for your hard work and commitment.

I encourage all of you to continue your efforts, working together at both the local and state levels.

A good example of working together has been the effort to open a "Black Child and Family Center" in Lansing.

It's a community-based project supported by small business . . . educators . . . the church . . . local officials . . . professionals . . . and other local citizen groups.

Yes, working together we can make a difference.

Therefore, I will direct the Human Services Cabinet and Mike Murphy to work together to review the Black Child in Crisis report and to assess the most effective way to implement these recommendations.

The Black Child in Crisis

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Joseph H. McMillan

Assistant Provost
University of Louisville

It is a signal honor and privilege to have been invited as keynote speaker to this culminating conference on ***The Black Child in Crisis***. It is a particularly significant and timely topic. It is heartwarming to know that some of my friends whom I consider to be among America's most outstanding organizers and thinkers: viz., Barbara Mason and Phil Runkel, conceived the idea of a series of public forums and symposia, and have now come with recommendations for dealing with the plight of the Black child in Michigan. Because I am suffering from an acute case of information overload, it may be difficult to observe the thirty minute time frame, but I will try. I will talk for a minute, teach for a few minutes, and then conclude with a mini-sermon.

During the past seven years I have taught a course at the University of Louisville, "The Black Child." In this course I have always attempted to approach the study of the Black child from a positive point of view. The literature is replete with pathological studies which are based on the fallacious assumption that the Black child is a kind of deviant or sick white child. Indeed most of the studies of the Black family have been undergirded by this assumption. This kind of "Blaming the Victim" analysis has resulted in a plethora of "deficit" studies. It is somewhat strange and paradoxical that this kind of pejorative approach to the study of the Black family was started by E. Franklin Frazier, a Black sociologist who wrote the first major treatise on the Black family in 1939. Much of the succeeding research utilized the Frazierian approach of relying on census data, hospital records, and court records for data which were ostensibly spurious.

I am happy that the conveners of these series of forums, symposia and conferences looked at the Black child in crisis instead of the crisis of the Black child. A crisis is a time of great danger whose outcome decides whether possible bad consequences will follow. In this respect, the Black child and the Black family are in crisis. In an era of cut backs, roll backs, take backs and go backs, the most oppressed people in the history of this country are certainly in danger. This great peril lurks in every dilapidated home and project high rise in the central cities of this country. A country which has been built on the precepts of racism and white supremacy has retarded itself by oppressing the very groups of people whom they regarded as "beasts of burden" and chattel. As Dr. Martin Luther King said so eloquently, "you can't hold a man back without holding yourself back." In order to keep me down you must bend your back and stoop to my level ever so often.

Nakasone, the leader of Japan, a second world nation vying for hegemony in the world, insulted several minority group leaders a few weeks ago with his statement regarding America's intellectual lag. He said that it was because of the drag of Hispanics, Blacks, and American Indians. However, on close analysis, he was correct. America has retarded herself by engaging in so many methods of oppression which includes slavery, peonage, lynchings, and discrimination. So now all of America is in crisis, and as a leader of the world she has contributed mightily to a crisis in the entire world. Earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, nuclear blasts, mass killings, pestilence, famine, endless wars and disputes are all indications of a world in crisis.

Into this crisis the Black child is born. There is no way that this Black child can cause a crisis: on the contrary, the Black child is a victim of 246 years of slavery, 91 years of segregation and 32 years of the most insidious kind of racism and discrimination known to man.

So rather in this discourse to engage in the kind of academic flagellation ushered in by the Fraziers, Moynihans, and Moyers, I came to extol the strengths of the Black child and to recommend that all of these Michigan agencies and institutions take a fresh look at this Black child who may well be the salvation for Michigan and the nation.

As we forge out programs to save the Black child and the Black family, we must proceed on a positive note. One of the greatest feats in all of human history has been the protracted struggle and survival of the Black family and its children in spite of the horrors of the middle passage, the long night of slavery and the nadir of discrimination.

There is a plethora of research on the Black child which extols his strengths and virtues. Hale, Wilson, and Kunjufu are among the African American scholars who have taken this approach in studying the Black child. This approach follows the earlier research on the Black family by Andrew Billingsley, Robert Hill, and Robert Staples. This approach can be

summarized in the title of a paper by one of America's foremost Black family researchers, Wade Nobles, who wrote "Africa's Root and America's Fruit."

In reviewing the literature on the Black child, several natural chacteristics are identified in most studies. The characteristics are idiosyncratically African American and are born out in the kind of "duality of socialization" depicted by Dubois in 1903, as a "double consciousness" or "two warring souls in one dark body." This kind of push and pull dynamic has resulted in a Black child whose very psyche is forged from the African principle of "I am because we are and because we are, therefore I am."

Some of these characteristics are:

(1). The Black child is people oriented.
(2). The Black child is rhythmic.
(3). The Black child has a high level sensori-motor ability.
(4). The Black child prefers oral-aural modalities for learning communication.
(5). The Black child is highly affective.
(6). The Black child expresses herself or himself through considerable body language.

These characteristics of the Black child emanate from an African ethos which stresses the "survival of the tribe" rather than "survival of the fittest," and "oneness with nature" rather than "control of nature."

Perhaps the most seminal piece of research on children of African descent was conducted by Marcelle Geber in 1968. In this study she compared African and European psychomoter development. Her results reveal that the Black child in the pre-school period—indeed in infancy—surpasses the European child in terms of psychomotor development. These findings have been corrobated by Bayley in 1965, and Knoblock and Pasamanick in 1953.

In the past few years several Black scholars, including Pasteur and Tolston have shown the high correlation between intellectual development and melanin, a substance in the body which produces color pigmentation. Black children, who are blessed with high concentrations of this natural substance, enter life with a clear advantage over children of yellow, red and white extractions.

If Black children are endowed by the Creator with such gifts and attributes, why are they in crisis? I submit that the crisis is in the environment, and not in the children who may be the brightest set of children ever born in the western hemisphere. This crisis stems from the conditions of life which affect the Black child from point of conception.

The single most important determinant of the quality of life is the infant mortality rate. In most urban communities this rate for Black children has quadrupled the rate for white children. In a graph showing infant mortality rates by race from 1940 to 1980, the infant mortality rate for Blacks about doubled the rate for whites in each decade. Closely related for Blacks about doubled the rate for whites in each decade. Closely related to the infant mortality rate is the phenomenon of low birth weight. As pointed out by a study conducted by the Children's Defense Fund in 1985, "Black babies are more than twice as likely as white babies to be low weight at birth (less than 5.5 pounds). Low birthweight infants are more than 20 times more likely to die in the first year of life." As Wilson cogently states, "During the pre-natal period, the nine month preparatory period before the American Black child is born, or is conscious, even in a primitive way, of its existence in the world, let alone what kind of world he is to born into, he is much more a victim of that world's adverse effects than is any other ethnic American child."

This Black child suffers from the physical, emotional, political, economic and psychological consequences of the Black condition in America. He not only bears the scars of antebellum slavery, but also the stripes of modern day slavery whose tendrils extend deep into the heart of the ghetto. Unemployment, joblessness, and miseducation are inextricably linked to high crime rates, high prison rates, increasing suicide rates, high rates of homicides, etc. The percentage of Black children in poverty is a staggering 86%. While children as a cohort group are America's poorest, Black children are unquestionably the poorest set of people in America.

Black professionals who study the Black experience are caught in the "horns of a dilemma." We can continue to use our skills to debunk the Moynihans of this world or we can utilize our talents to fight off the perils that endanger the very existence of Black people in this country. As a Black father, who happens to have earned a doctorate at Michigan State University, I have made a choice to work in the community to alleviate the horrible conditions of life which all Black children must face. With one son in a Michigan prison and two sons who have flirted with mental illness for years, I am firmly committed to action. All of my sons were raised in a Christian home environment, but fell prey to the heavy influence of the street. Once caught up in this ecology of the street, with its drugs and violence, our children can either go to jail, a mental institution, or back to the street. Ogbu and Perkins have documented the influence of this street on Black men.

I will continue to study the statistical data and research studies which point up the problems of the Black family and the Black child. However, some of this research seems to be based on a principle of "research for research's sake," a kind of throwback to the academic model of "publish or perish."

At a recent National Black Child Development Institute Conference, I sat in on several research seminars which dealt with such questions as:

(1). The Impact of Foster Care on the Lives of Foster Families.
(2). Development of Racial Sensitivity: Scales to Facilitate Culturally Sensitive Social Work Practice.
(3). The Development of Aggressive Prone and Non-Institutional Black Inner-City Adolescents.
(4). Locus of Control, Religiosity and Family Support as Psychosocial Correlates of Sexual Behavior of Low Income, Urban Black Adolescent Females.
(5). Mother/Child Interaction Between Homeless Women and Their Children as Observed in a Night Shelter.

All of these papers were well researched and all of the proper research techniques were used. Prominent statistical methods included A Nova, Chi Square and F Tests. One paper regarding mother/child interaction was well read, but the researcher at the end could not answer the question, "Why were mothers with children in a homeless night shelter?" In her implications, she hedged by saying that volunteers were replacing real mothers of sheltered children—a situation the researcher labeled as "public mothering." She seemed baffled by this phenomenon and had no recommendations to solve the problem.

I am not opposed to this kind of statistical research, but I think we now know enough to put something in action:

If Black males are aggressive, how can we turn their aggressive behavior into positive pursuits and outcomes?
If Blacks learn better by rhythm and music, how can we teach mathematics and science utilizing the "rap?"
If Black females are becoming sexually active at an earlier age, how can we teach them to say "no?"

I see the necessity for research based on good research techniques to study the Black child: however, more action plans need to be developed to tap the unmatchable wit, skill, and sensitivity of the Black child in 1986. For example, if I know that there are 3,000 boarded-up homes in the city of Grand Rapids and there is 72% Black male unemployment, but also I know that there are 100 retired Black carpenters, brick layers and electricians, then why not set up a project to train Black teenagers (even through the unions) to repair the boarded up homes in the community? Can I call in the Black ministers in a community to set up a Simba Program through which Black preadolescents from 9 to 13 are prepared for the rites of passage? Perkins and Hare in their books, ***Harvesting New Generations*** and ***Bringing The Black Boy to Manhood,*** have already given us the blueprint. Can I network with all of the agencies in a community to design a manhood training program? If Omega Psi Phi on college campuses can create a desire for a young Black man "to swear I will be a "Q" to the day I die," I truly believe that all the well meaning parents in a community will ban together to forge out manhood training programs. With all of the ministers, deacons, teachers and scout leaders in the Black community, it seems time to hook-up. A few weeks go I witnessed a miraculous paradox in my native community of South Louisville, one of the centers for "crack" dealing in Louisville. The "crack dealers" gave an outdoor party for the little children of the neighborhood. If crack dealers can begin training programs for young children, upstanding citizens can do much more.

There is no other person in America who earns the title, "Endangered Species" more than the Black male child whose life expectance of 65.4 makes it difficult for him to ever collect his pension. The life chances of Black male children are drastically reduced by such alarming facts as:

(1). The number 1 killer of Black men, ages 17-35, is homicide, elsewhere labeled "fratricide." One out of every 22 Black American males will be killed by a violent crime.
(2). Suicide ranked as the number 3 killer of young Black men in 1980, but may be number 2 by 1990.
(3). Forty or more percent of all prisoners are Black males. In some states, those that have capital punishment, 2/3 of all prisoners on death row are Black men.
(4). Black males drop out of school at alarming rates.
(5). One out of every 6 Black males will be arrested by the time they reach age 19.
(6). Unemployment among Black youth ranges between 46% and 52% nationwide. In many large cities, 70% of Black men in the age group 17-35 are unemployed.

The case of the Black male child has become the subject of many recent studies which include:

(1). ***Bringing The Black Boy To Manhood,*** by Julia and Nathan Hare.
(2). ***Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys,*** Volumes I and II, by Jawanza Kunjufu.
(3). ***Motivating Black Youth to Work,*** by Jawanza Kunjufu.

The plight of the Black Male child is linked to the future of Black people in this country. If there are not Black males to "father the race," the hope of some conspirators is that the Black family will indeed vanish.

In 1986, following the Moyers documentary, "The Vanishing Black Family," Blacks all over the country held conferences, think tanks and symposia to deal with the "conspiracy to destroy Black (male) children." This is a conspiracy that can be likened to Biblical times in the days of King Herod who killed the first born male child in his attempt to destory the Messiah. Although at birth Black males slightly out number females, they are drastically wiped out by the time that they reach the "marrying/reproductive" age. The diminishing sex-ratio has had a tremendous impact on Black male/female relationships, which is one of the most discussed topics in Black America. The specter of "Mister" hangs over the head of Black male/female relationships. "Timothy" of Vanishing Black Family fame is being projected as the model Black man.

I take the position that in spite of all of the attacks on Black manhood, strong-willed, dedicated, and spirited young Black men will rise up. Those of us in the agencies which deal with them must begin to approach them with the understanding that America, if it is to be strong, needs strong, courageous dedicated Black men. It is easier and much less costly to develop academic olympic programs for them than to warehouse them in the prisons, mental institutions and jails. It is much easier to begin innovative programs which tap their natural abilities at the pre-school and pre-adolescent levels than try to design programs to counteract gangs in later years. Black professionals who work in all of the agencies represented here must declare "class suicide" and take off the high-brow, hands-off, holier-than-thou perspectives and join with community based groups to combat a serious problem, the destruction of a generation of Black boys. You must join the battle against crack, alcohol and teenage pregancy. However, you must be prepared to fight the war against mentacide (the destruction of the mind).

Kunjufu has said that mothers raise their daughters but love their sons. We must help raise Black boys in our urban communities. I am involved with several community-based programs which deal with youth. Some of these are church, Fourth Quarters, and ACT coaching clinics. All of us should begin to work in our communities to see that sex, and drinking and driving do not become the rites of passage. We can provide alternatives for our youth besides basketball and boogie. We must stress those principles outlined by Na'im Akbar which he labels as outcomes of self-knowledge:

(1). Self-acceptance
(2). Self-help
(3). Self-discovery
(4). Self-preservation

The Black child is America's future. In many ways the Black child is a gift to America for he/she represents hope. To African Americans, he represents our soul. Wrapped up in his small body are the hopes, aspirations and dreams of the living, the dead, and the yet unborn. As a child watcher, I see those babies born to those young mothers. Their eyes are bright and shining at birth. Their minds are not like minds of other children. A Black child's mind is not a tabula rasa. They already know, and in some ways, have internalized the suffering, the pain, the agony, but also the spirit, the sagacity, and the strength of their forefathers.

In my class, I compared photographs of four generations of infant black children by having students bringing in family photographs. There is a marked difference between the look of a Black child born in the early 1900's (as was my mother) from a young Black child born in the 1980's (as was my granddaughter). Although there are striking resemblances, the look has changed from one of despair to one of hope, from one of confusion and puzzlement to one of brightness and resolve.

Your challenge as social workers, corrections officers, mental health supervisors, and others is to translate that look of hope into productivity and pride of accomplishment. I know that you will do this. In the words of the great Black clinical psychologist, Dr. Bobby Wright, who literally worked himself to death, "A luta continua—lasina tushinde mbilishaka," translated, "The struggle continues—we will win without a doubt."

Remarks

Gary Owen, Speaker of the House

represented by

James A. Kosteva

House of Representatives
State of Michigan

On behalf of Speaker Gary Owen, I would like to extend my congratulations to the participants of the "Black Child in Crisis" Symposia and Conference and commend each and every one of you for your efforts in addressing this very important issue.

I hope very much, as we begin to work together on solutions to some of the difficulties confronting the minority child, that we realize that education is, has been and will continue to be of special importance in attempting to address this situation.

In recognition of that fact, I would like to draw special attention to two recommendations made by this group, which I feel are extremely important to the resolution of this crisis.

As you have clearly pointed out, one of the first steps we need to take in addressing this problem is the recognition that there is an overwhelming need for an early childhood development program.

In response to that need, I am pleased to be able to report that the House of Representatives has already begun working out the details of a proposal which would bring a quality program of early-childhood education to every Michigan school district with an above-average portion of educationally disadvantaged preschoolers.

We know where the high-risk three- and four-year-olds are, and we know how to identify them. We know that every dollar invested in quality preschool education, offered where the need is the greatest, will return up to seven dollars in savings on other types of tax-dollar expenditures society is currently making.

We also know, with frightening statistical certainty, the incredible costs that will be incurred in the future if this glaring need is not met, immediately and emphatically!

We have to get the message across, however, that this is an investment, not an expenditure, and that it is absolutely critical that it be made one of our top priorities if we are to begin to address the needs of the disadvantaged child.

Second, I would like to commend this group for its willingness to look at and pursue what I consider to be one of the most serious problems confronting education today—a problem which was not even touched upon in any of the national reports. That is, our inability to insure an equal education for all children—in particular, the black child in crisis.

Under our Constitution, the Legislature has a responsibility to "maintain and support a system of free public elementary and secondary schools as defined by law."

We are not meeting that responsibility because, in the State of Michigan today, we do not have ***"a system"*** of public schools—but two systems—very separate and highly unequal.

We have so-called "in-formula" school districts where roughly 75% of the public school children of the state receive their educations—and where a state equalization formula has eradicated any relationship between property-tax-base wealth and the quality of education children receive.

Then we have so-called out-of-formula districts, where local tax-base wealth brings in more revenue per pupil than the state can afford to guarantee other districts in state and local funding combined—and where roughly 25% of the children can have more spent on their educations while their parents and neighbors pay lower taxes!

In 1984-85, the average Michigan in-formula district levied slightly more than 36 mills and received roughly $2,736 per pupil in combined state and local revenue.

The average out-of-formula district levied a total of about 32 mills, 4 mills less, yet had revenue of nearly $3,419 per pupil to spend!

In other words, parents in the average in-formula district paid about ***$290 more*** in school taxes—and had ***$683 less spent*** on the education of each of their children.

Now before someone reminds me that money does not necessarily buy quality education, and that we do not educate children directly with dollars but rather with teachers and counselors and librarians and other support staff, let me offer a few figures that will be more meaningful.

The average out-of-formula district employed one classroom teacher for every 19.8 pupils. The average in-formula district employed one classroom teacher for every 21.9 pupils.

In terms of total staff, the average out-of-formula district employed 105.8 full-time persons for every 1,000 pupils. The average in-formula district could afford to employ only 92.4!

In other words, we have a dual school system here—and I would like to suggest that this should be of special concern to anyone who is truly interested in addressing the difficulties faced by the black child.

The reason why is simply stated. Fully 22.9% of the children being educated in the disfavored "in-formula" districts—the "poor" or "have-not" districts—are black. In the favored "out-of-formula" school districts of this state—the "have" districts or the "rich" districts or whatever anyone wishes to call them—only 4.3% of the children are black!

I think this situation is intolerable! Whether in terms of cold, incontrovertible statistics—or in terms of the daily routine and the measure of educational opportunity available to each schoolchild—we have, once again, two very separate and most decidedly unequal school systems!

But this is not a problem that can be resolved simply by proposing or adopting a new state aid formula, as we sometimes hear suggested—our present formula already achieves the greatest possible equalization the dollars put into it will permit.

It is not a problem that can be resolved in a piecemeal fashion or through overly simplified solutions to an extremely complex problem.

This is not an issue that can be resolved by Legislative action alone. It is a problem that can be resolved only through a determined commitment and a total effort from the Legislature, the educational community and from concerned and dedicated individuals like yourself.

I would like to suggest today that we vigorously and persistently insist that school-finance reform be regarded as our Number-One priority and that it be given the top spot on anyone and everyone's agenda until this problem is fully resolved.

Once again, I would like to congratulate you for the excellent job you have done in bringing this issue out into the open, and most importantly, for your willingness to look at and identify possible solutions to one of the most difficult problems we face today.

On behalf of Speaker Owen, it is my privilege to present you with this special tribute commemorating "The Black Child in Crisis Symposia and Conference."

Remarks

John Engler

Majority Leader of the Senate
State of Michigan

With a major state election just two weeks away, I'm sure many of you are expecting a speech full of big plans and big promises. But that's not what you'll get from me.

You are the stars today. You have put in the hours and days and months compiling this report. You have sifted through data from around the country and around the state to find the best responses to what has become one of our worst problems.

As Senate Majority Leader, the whole issue of black children concerns me. Making a state work is a very complex task. And when one group of people are disadvantaged simply by being born a particular color or in a particular location or with a particular last name, we all lose. We lose socially and we lose economically. And as far as I'm concerned, there's no excuse for either.

The report you are releasing today is a milestone in removing the disadvantages many minority children face. I see an emphasis on input from the private sector, with new partnerships to deal with the unemployment problems young black people face, as well as single black parents. Our state's businesses know their success is closely tied to a qualified, able workforce, and we need to convince them to put their money where their potential workforce is. I see a new stress on parental responsibility and commitment, and an emphasis on educational access. I see a renewed fight against the underground economy, and greater efforts to fight the seductive lure of high risk-high profit ventures on the street.

And what separates this group from many other special interest groups is its bottom line. Your bottom line is self-sufficiency. Not another handout. Not another social welfare program. But a fair shake. An equal chance. It's no more than everyone deserves, regardless of background. And I support efforts to provide that opportunity.

I said a few minutes ago that I wouldn't offer big plans and big promises. But I will offer a medium-sized promise. It's my pledge to continue working to bring fairness and opportunity to those who may not have it.

We started off right this past year with a comprehensive, innovative package of bills beefing up child support enforcement and non-custodial parent rights, which was a good start.

We've also focused on a preventive approach to crime. Early this session, we introduced a nine-bill Safe Streets package which combined tougher sentencing guidelines with strategies preventing youth crime. After passing with overwhelming bi-partisan support in the Senate, the proposals still sit gathering dust in the House.

But the Family Equity Package and Safe Streets initiative were only a beginning. Your work shows clearly there's much more to be done. Working together is working smart. Black families throughout the state will be the direct beneficiaries, but we all stand to win. It's our responsibility to safeguard and encourage the potential in our children. Your work has brought us far—but there is still a long way to go. And there's no time to lose.

Congratulations on the outstanding job you've done on this report. Thank you for inviting me to be here, and I look forward to working with you as we make these recommendations a reality.

APPENDIX B

Interagency Committee on the Black Child in Crisis

Interagency Committee on the Black Child in Crisis

Barbara Roberts Mason
Convener

Martha W. Griffith
Lieutenant Governor
State of Michigan
Co-Chair

C. Patrick Babcock
Director
Department of Mental Health
Co-Chair

Phillip E. Runkel
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction
Department of Education
Co-Chair

Paul Kindinger
Director
Department of Agriculture

John Castillo
Director
Department of Civil Rights

Douglas Ross
Director
Department of Commerce

Robert Brown, Jr.
Director
Department of Corrections

Elizabeth Howe
Director
Department of Labor

Robert Naftaly
Director
Department of Management and Budget

Gordon Guyer
Director
Department of Natural Resources

Gloria Smith
Director
Department of Public Health

Agnes M. Mansour
Director
Department of Social Services

Richard Austin
Secretary of State

Colonel Gerald Hough
Director
Department of State Police

James P. Pitz
Dirctor
Department of Transportation

Public Forums, Symposia and Conference Planning Committee on the Black Child in Crisis

Eugene L. Cain, *Chairperson*
Dept. of Education

Claudette Nelson, *Co-Chair*
Dept. of Education

L. Annette Abrams, *Co-Chair*
Dept of Mental Health

Edward D. Wright, *Project Coordinator*

Office of the Governor

Susan Arneaud
Mike Murphy
Libby Richards

Office of the Lt. Governor

Claudia Lauchie

State Legislature

Representative Alma Stallworth

Department of Agriculture

James Manning
Vincent Parris

Department of Education

Lural Baltimore
Gertrude Bonaparte
Patricia Dunn
Ron Gillum
Richard Jackson
Robert McConnell
Cecelia Mobley
Eva Redwine
James Rudolph

Department of Civil Rights

Nanette Reynolds

Department of Commerce

Louis Green
Lurecie Stokes

Department of Corrections

Thomas Goretzka
Diane Spence
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GRAND RAPIDS

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KALAMAZOO STEERING COMMITTEE

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DETROIT STEERING COMMITTEE

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APPENDIX C

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Maternal death rate higher among blacks

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